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S E R E N A.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY
CATHARINE SELDEN,

AUTHOR OF THE ENGLISH NUN, &c.

“ Trust not man; he is by nature false,
“ Dissembling, subtle, cruel, and inconstant.”

OTWAY.

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S E R E N A.

CHAP. I.

“ Sink, sink, dire Remembrance!

“ Be blotted out the time when first I saw thee!

“ Perish the hours that aided to my shame,

“ And witness’d when I woo’d thy treacherous charms!

“ Curs’d be my blindness, and thy own deceit.”

ON the day when Lord Somerset was first able to leave his room, Mrs. Powis, who was always eager to put any plan she had formed into execution, introduced a visiter

at the castle in the person of Miss Mortimer. The Peer and his amiable daughter received her with the most engaging politeness; and Mrs. Powis, in the admiring gaze of the Count and Chevalier at her new friend, triumphed to see her taste in female beauty approved. Miss Mortimer was, indeed, perfectly handsome; to a person of the middle size, delicately proportioned, she united a face whose form a statuary might delight to copy, animated with the glowing tints of health and youthful hilarity, and still more by large dark blue eyes, and ornamented by a profusion of light brown hair. She appeared to be under twenty, and to manners the most fascinating, united a clear and brilliant understanding.

In a few days Miss Mortimer had an admirer

admirer in every person in Somerset Castle : at one time gay, sportive, and her conversation embellished by the most playful fallies of wit—at another, mild, serious, and pensive ; her carriage was in every way so engaging, that it was impossible to resist her powers of fascination. None more sensibly felt them than Lord Somerset, whom she appeared sedulous to please and amuse ; and this trait of character so endeared her to Miss Delville, that when, after an absence of a fortnight, she visited Serena, she mentioned her in terms of the highest praise to that young lady.

“ Ah ! ” said Serena, sighing, “ how happy is Miss Mortimer to be an inmate in that beloved mansion I must never hope to enter more, and to have an opportunity

of endearing herself to the person that I must venerate at a distance!"

"Why at a distance, my dear Serena?" said Miss Delville. "Trust me there is nothing my father more truly desires than to have you again under his roof, and to see you united to my brother."

Miss Delville spoke in an accent, and with a look of cheerfulness that seemed, together with her words, to wring the heart of Serena. She pressed her infant, (now recovered, and lying on her lap), to her bosom, and burst into a passion of tears, that terrified the timid, affectionate Philippa. She would have taken the child from his mother; but she held it yet closer to her heart, exclaiming—"Oh, do not deprive

deprive me of this dear cherub, for whose sake I have given up every fond hope of future felicity, lest, when beholding him no longer, I should repine at the sacrifice I have made!"

"What sacrifice? To what do you allude?" demanded Miss Delville, fearfully.

"*To this!*" answered the unfortunate Serena, displaying her left hand, on which shone a plain gold ring. "I am now indeed the wife of Delamain!"

Miss Delville burst into tears. Serena wept with her, and both remained silent for some time, till the former, raising her eyes to those of her friend, said—"Alas! beloved Serena, what is it you have done?"

“ Made *myself* miserable, and secured a name and fortune to this dear boy!”

“ And Delville is then——”

Serena interrupted her hastily.—“ Name not Delville!” she cried; “ never mention him more to the wretched creature who has betrayed him to misery! Little did my unfortunate brother, when he committed me to the care of his noble friend, think that I should prove the bane of his felicity!”

Serena was again silent, and gave herself up to weeping; but at length rousing herself from the supineness incurable sorrow is apt to cause in the mind, she resumed, with some appearance of firmness—

“ Philippa,

“ Philippa, we must meet no more! I must for the future fly every person and place that can bring Delville to my recollection! I am Mr. Delamain’s wife; and though he has promised not to desire me ever even to see him, I owe him the respect of giving up my connections with the family of Sir Piercy. You are at liberty to relate every circumstance of my life to Lord Somerfet, that his son may be exonerated from blame; but I must see him no more. Yet I wish it were consistent with my duty to pay him one visit, to thank him for his numberless kindnesses to me.”

Miss Delville, when she recovered her suspended powers of speech, exerted all her rhetoric in vain to prevail on Serena to

indulge herself by admitting a visit from Lord Somerset. Serena constantly repeated she was the wife of Mr. Delamain, and refused to see any person related so nearly to the object of his jealousy and hatred.

Miss Delville, therefore, on her return home, could only relate the story of Serena to her father, and mention the resolution she had taken.

“It is worthy of Serena,” said the Peer, when he heard of it, “yet it must not be persevered in; she has again been betrayed, and it will need all my power and skill to save her from the most miserable of all destinies, that of being obliged to live with a man she lothes and despises.”

Miss

Miss Delville would have urged to Lord Somerset the promise Mr. Delamain had made Serena, not to insist on even seeing her; but this amiable girl was too timid, and felt too particularly an awe of her father to make any observations on what he said.

On the following morning, Lord Somerset, supported on one side by his daughter, and on the other by his young friend, the Count de Melanville, repaired to Serena's cottage, where he offered that unfortunate young creature the most ample protection his house and influence could afford her, urging such reasons why she ought to accept of it, as determined her to do so; and two days afterwards (still as Miss Hennington) she returned to Somerset Castle, the benevolent master of which had prepared

his family to receive her as just returned from Norfolk. The young Piercy was, at the request of Lord Somerset, sent to a house of his in Northamptonshire, and put under the care of a natural daughter of the late Lord, who presided there as house-keeper.

The *foi-disant* Miss Hennington had been scarcely a week at the castle, when one day after dinner, a servant presented her an unsealed billet, the perusal of which seemed to give her violent emotion. She turned extremely pale; the paper shook in her fingers, and she appeared scarcely able to support herself. Lord Somerset, who sat beside her, kindly took the hand which held the billet, and looking in her face, enquired what distressed her, and by a glance demanded

demanded if he might read the paper which had caused so much agitation.

She gave it to him; and having run his eye over it, pressed Serena's hand affectionately, and left the room with it in his hand.

On enquiring amongst his servants for the person who had brought the billet to Miss Hennington, Lord Somerset was informed that he was in the library; and he immediately hastened thither, as fast as his rheumatism would permit.

Notwithstanding the habitual politeness of Lord Somerset, so great was his abhorrence of the person he now met, that he could only slightly bow to him; and as he

could not prevail on himself to ask him to sit, remained standing also. There was something of majesty in the upright figure of his Lordship as he stood leaning on a large cane, his tall, thin person clad in a dress that was fashionable ten years before, with his deep ruffles, and his grey hair dressed to a nicety;—with all the stiffness of an old courtier in his air, though nothing of it in his manner, as displaying the billet he had received from Serena, he said—“ I learn from this paper that I see Mr. Delamain, and he probably guesses that I am the master of this house.”

“ I am glad to be informed of it,” replied Mr. Delamain, sarcastically bowing, “ otherwise I should have imagined the
shade

shade of Lord Chesterfield haunted your Lordship's library."

"It must then be to do honour to so excellent a disciple of the ^{old} simulating school," replied his Lordship; "but I despise both the principle and practice."

"It is pretty evident, my Lord," returned Delamain, with his customary sneering politeness; "your Lordship's conversation seems to me formed in the same pithy school of Sir Piercy Delville's."

"You pay me a compliment, Mr. Delamain;—I glory in my son, and I think myself honoured by representing him, as I request you will consider me as doing.—Will you not be seated, Sir?"

"I thank

“I thank you, my Lord.—Your Lordship, having read my note, must know that I desire to see Mrs. Delamain.”

“Miss Hennington, Sir, has sent her guardian to hear what you wish to say.”

“I know no Miss Hennington, my Lord.”

“We mean the same person, Mr. Delamain; but I am too well aware that I speak to a gentleman *learned in the law*, to adopt your mode of styling Serena Hennington, once by your artifices disgraced, by the name of Delamain.”

“Your Lordship, indeed, does not simulate!”

simulate!" said Mr. Delamain, with haughty coolness.

"It is not fit I should, Sir. I here stand in the place of my son, and from your ingenious misrepresentation of his sentiments delivered on a former occasion, I find it necessary that I should make myself perfectly intelligible."

"I wish to see Serena, my Lord," cried the proud and impatient Mr. Delamain.

"Sir, you cannot see her.—Please to explain yourself to me," said the Peer, calmly, yet spiritedly.

"You, I suppose, my Lord, do not pretend to be that lady's guardian?"

"I pre-

“I pretend to nothing, Mr. Delamain—
—I am the representative of my son.”

“Who has had the kindness to delegate his authority over Mrs. Delamain to you?—He is really very obliging!” said Mr. Delamain, with another of his sarcastic obeisances.

“Once for all, Mr. Delamain,” returned Lord Somerset, with dignity, “I would have you understand that I am too old to be played upon by the petulance of a young man, who just knows enough of the laws of his country to enable him to justify the violation of them in their spirit, though perhaps not their words; and too young tamely to see innocence become the prey of art and duplicity. Our ideas of the
duties

duties of a guardian appear to me to differ considerably. Sir Piercy Delville, when he undertook the guardianship of Miss Hennington, did it not to controul her inclinations, but to protect her from Mr. Delamain, who, her brother always dreaded, meant to disturb her repose. He has entrusted his precious charge to me, and I will guard her with a father's care."

"When a lady marries, my Lord," said Mr. Delamain, "that care is generally esteemed superfluous."

"To own a truth, Mr. Delamain," returned Lord Somerset, coldly, "your opinion has not much weight with me, nor has your will any influence. But will you have the goodness to inform me
what

what was your business with Miss Hennington?"

"To know why she chose to throw herself into the protection of Sir Piercy Delville's family."

"I can inform you, Sir. It was because she thought it her only means of being freed from the persecutions of Mr. Delamain."

"I had promised not even to desire to see her," said Delamain, angrily.

"And do you conceive, Sir," demanded the indignant Peer, "that except when terrified by your violence, and perplexed by your specious arguments, she could be the fool to believe you? What, but getting her

her into your power, could you have in view in marrying her, unless it was the diabolical desire of rendering her and Delville miserable? It was not the advantage of your son, for he was born out of wedlock, and must ever remain illegitimate; it was not your concern for her fame, for you knew your own baseness could never cause any reflection on her purity:—to be plain with you, Sir, your conduct in the latter part of this affair has been at least as infamous as in the commencement. You are the sworn foe of my son, not only in the field of private honour, but mean to carry your animosity into the scenes of public warfare, where every private quarrel should be annihilated, and therefore I should hold no communication with you; but you must allow me to recapitulate to you some of the

the

the late transactions, and try whether you can deny them.

“ Did you not promise my son to refrain from writing to, or seeing Miss Hennington till she was of age?—and did you keep that promise?—No, Sir, Delville had scarcely left the country when you wrote to Miss Hennington! You drew inferences, you knew were false, from his conduct; you misinterpreted, wilfully misinterpreted, his words, and persuaded Miss Hennington that the man tacitly acceded to your wishes, who, at your last meeting, repeatedly declared to you that he never would give his consent to your even seeing his ward—told you he never would be your friend, and even risked his life to prove his abhorrence of your treachery!

“ You

“ You say that Delville has left England—I do not know that he has; but, at all events, I am forthcoming: and I give you fair warning, that if you make any attempt to get Miss Hennington into your hands, by law or otherwise, that to the last shilling I am worth, I will prosecute you for, under false pretences, seducing a minor into a marriage contrary to the will of her guardian; nay, more, Mr. Delemain, if my ward will give me her permission, I will try if it is not possible to set aside this inauspicious marriage, and that too, were I certain at this moment that my son no longer lived to have his existence imbittered by a hopeless passion.

“ Have you any thing further to
urge,

urge, Mr. Delamain?" added Lord Somerset, rising.

"I shall urge it in a Court of Justice," returned his angry opponent.

"Of law, you mean?—But as you please, Sir," said his Lordship; and making a stiff bow to Mr. Delamain, he left him in possession of his library.

Not even in his altercation with Delville had Mr. Delamain found himself so completely humbled as he felt at this moment. The irritable and impetuous temper of Delville laid him so much open to the sarcastic attacks of his cooler rival, and by hurrying him into anger, subjected him also to humiliation, in which Delamain triumphed: but
that

that gentleman, in his conversation with Lord Somerset, had found his satire retorted on himself, or treated with contempt, his baseness coolly exposed to his own sickening view, and heard himself threatened with a shameful prosecution. Yet his fierce and enterprising spirit was not yet subdued; and when he quitted the castle, he resolved immediately to institute a suit against Lord Somerset for withholding his wife: not that he supposed such a suit could ever be supported; but well knowing Lord Somerset's aversion to the law, he meant to put him to trouble and expence, and was not without hopes that, to avoid the plague of attending the Courts, he would go abroad with his fair charge, which was "a consummation devoutly to be wished."

When

When Lord Somerset returned to the dining parlour, he found Serena had gone to her own room, accompanied by Miss Delville, but his niece and Miss Mortimer still remained; the former evidently for the purpose of enquiring what was the matter concerning Serena: for she said, immediately on his entrance—"Pray, my Lord, what have you done with Serena's lover?"

"I know nothing of any lover of Miss Hennington's, Emily," returned his Lordship, gravely.

"Nay now, my Lord," cried the lady, "that is what we used to call at school a white lie, for you know my cousin Piercy is her lover."

"And

"And I, perhaps, another," said the Peer, smiling.

"Oh no, my Lord, not so either," said Miss Mortimer; "you know you are my sworn champion."

"I am the sworn champion of beauty and innocence," returned the good man, with one of the formal bows of the last age.

"Had I but been beautiful, and known you sooner!" Miss Mortimer said with a sigh, and shaking her head.

Lord Somers set rallied her a little on her "had I but been beautiful!" but she had sunk into one of her pensive moods, and he had too much delicacy to persist.

Delicacy, however, was not a quality very troublesome to Mrs. Powis; and she pressed her uncle so closely concerning the person he had gone to speak to, and the meaning of Serena's agitation, that he was obliged to answer at length that it was a person who reminded her of the late Lieutenant Hennington, and that was what had disturbed her in all probability. By this little equivocation (for it was certainly no more), Serena was freed from the tormenting enquiries of Mrs. Powis, who seldom suffered any subject to rest till her curiosity was either fully gratified or laid asleep.

When the two ladies retired to the drawing-room, Miss Mortimer asked Mrs. Powis who Miss Hennington was.

“ She

“ She is the daughter of the Honourable Mr. Hennington, who was killed in the American war,” replied the widow.

“ Was it he who bequeathed her to the care of Lord Somerset?” again enquired Miss Mortimer.

“ Oh no, she is not my uncle’s ward at all. Her brother, who I think was an Officer in the Navy, left her in the care of my cousin Piercy Delville.”

“ By way of having her provided for by marrying this same Piercy you speak of?” said Miss Mortimer.

It is not to be supposed that Miss Mortimer, all charming as she was, was one

of those young ladies whose minds are never in undress; her's was so occasionally: but to do her justice, Mrs. Powis was the only person to whom she ever exhibited it in that state; probably only to her because she did not think the fair Emily had sufficient discernment to perceive it.

“Perhaps so,” said Mrs. Powis, in answer to the last remark of her friend.

“She seems a strange sort of girl,” observed Miss Mortimer.

“Rather reserved, but very good, I assure you; and a great favourite both with Philippa and my uncle.”

“That

“ That is pretty evident, I think; and it is as evidently her interest to be so.”

“ I declare,” said Mrs. Powis, “ I do not think her interest has any thing to do with it.”

“ Ah Emily, you are unsuspicious!”

“ Ah Sophy, you are mistrustful!”

“ Be it so,” said Miss Mortimer, gravely; “ but if I loved De Melanville, I should detest Miss Hennington.”

“ You cannot think he loves her?” exclaimed Mrs. Powis, in an apprehensive tone.

"He admires her certainly," returned Miss Mortimer, in the same grave manner.

"He cannot possibly avoid admiring her," said the widow, who now first began to recollect that she had not made Miss Mortimer her confidante in *all* things; "but I think my cousin Philly is in no danger of losing her captive."

"Your cousin Philly!" Miss Mortimer repeated with an arch smile, that called a deep blush into the countenance of Mrs. Powis.

It had never once entered that lady's imagination that she had, very early in their acquaintance, betrayed her secret to Miss Mortimer, who, however, had not till this

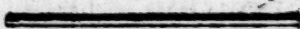
this evening, seemed to observe her partiality to De Melanville; and now, without considering how very evident it was to every observer, the fair widow gave her friend so much credit for discernment, that she doubted not she had a rival in Serena not so perfectly cold to the Count as was Miss Delville. Almost from that hour Mrs. Powis's behaviour to the unfortunate Serena underwent a considerable change—a circumstance that produced a consequence very different from what she could have wished, as it certainly lowered her in the opinion of the person she most wished to please.

At the time when Miss Delville had put so decided a negative upon the suit of the Count de Melanville, she had given him such very plain intimations of the partiality

of her cousin, that to misunderstand them was impossible; and it was equally impossible for a man, in so disagreeable a situation, not to think of profiting by such a circumstance as the attachment of a young, pretty, and amiable woman, with an independent fortune of three thousand pounds per annum.

The Count possessed as much delicacy of sentiment as any man living; yet he certainly deliberated very deeply upon this subject, and had almost come to a resolution to offer himself to Mrs. Powis's acceptance, when the change of her manner towards the gentle and unoffending Serena, (which the attention he paid to every word and look of the fair widow enabled him to discover before any one but Miss Mortimer suspected

suspected it), made him hesitate about entrusting his happiness to a woman of so fickle a disposition. He had, however, reasoned himself into a sufficient share of regard for Mrs. Powis, to make him assiduously endeavour to prevent her caprice being observed by others; and himself paid more than usual attention to Serena, as if he would thereby have made up for Mrs. Powis's deficiency, which this conduct was not very likely to lessen.



CHAP. II.

“ When the white billows into mountains grew,
“ And forked lightnings shot across the skies,
“ My deep regrets some short suspension knew,
“ And tumult gave what idleness denies.

“ But in the tranquil, silent hour of night,
“ Alone, unheard, I pour the mournful strain,
“ And by the pale moon’s melancholy light,
“ Gaze on th’ unruffled bosom of the main.”

LADY BURRELL.

WHILST the family at Somerset Castle were thus spending their time, Sir Piercy Delville was proceeding on his voyage to Sweden.

Sweden. For the first ten days he was at sea, the wind being boisterous and contrary, he was too busily employed in the duty of the ship for him to give much time to reflection; but when the gale became temperate and propitious, he had but too much leisure to be miserable. He now recollected a thousand things he had omitted to do before he left England, and severely arraigned himself for having suffered the anguish of his own heart to render him unmindful of that he might inflict on those of others.

He now saw clearly all the evils that might arise from the manner in which he had quitted his country without writing to Lord Somerset, as he had promised his sister he would do when he had no expectation

of seeing him. His imagination painted to him the suspense and uneasiness of Serena undermining her health, whilst she accused him of the most cruel neglect of the little boy he had promised to recommend to the care and protection of his father. Knowing the timidity of her disposition, he had not an idea that she would herself present her son to Lord Somerset, from whom she would more probably hide him and herself for ever; and to crown all, the maddening thought obtruded itself that he had not made a will, and that, should he find a watery grave before he reached Sweden, she would be as entirely destitute as she was on the death of her brother; and should she disdain applying to his father, she must either labour, or throw herself and infant on the bounty of Delamain for subsistence.

Never

Never before had Delville set so high a value upon his own life—never before dreaded the winds or waves; for never before had he committed a fault which he felt miserable lest it should not be in his power to repair.

Though remarkably fond of the sea, and at other times never so happy as when on it, Delville thought the voyage insupportably tedious. He could take no rest; he could not endure the company of his brother Officers, nor always that of his friend, the Captain; and if ever there was an hour when he felt even an absence of pain, it was when his watch obliged him to be on deck at night, and, pacing up and down in silence and solitude, he could indulge, without interruption or observation, in his

5 melancholy

melancholy contemplations: and not unfrequently he would take the watch of the other Lieutenants, who were by no means dissatisfied to have a person who would perform their duty for them without demanding them to take an extra turn to make up for it.

At length the frigate reached the Sound, where she was to remain only one day before she proceeded to Stockholm; and here Delville (who was determined to return to England by the first opportunity) left her, and going on shore at Elfsineur, waited there for a ship, bound for England or Scotland, to sail.

When Lord Somerset related to Serena the conversation he had had with Mr. Delamain,

Delamain, her spirits were extremely agitated; and incoherently thanking him for the interest he so kindly took in her affairs, she declared she would immediately quit the castle.

“ I will free this beloved mansion,” she cried, “ from the presence of a wretch whose unfortunate destiny pursues her every where, and who brings calamity to every person who gives her pity and protection. To-morrow, my Lord, I will leave this place—I will abandon myself to my fate!”

“ You may abandon *yourself*, Miss Hennington,” interrupted the venerable Lord Somerset, in a steady and determined manner, “ but I never will desert you. Even now, when you would unkindly fly my protection,

protection, I tell you, that except you acknowledge yourself the property of Mr. Delamain, and demand to be given up to him, you shall not leave my house. I feel myself answerable to my son for your conduct, and I will not forfeit his good opinion by permitting you to rush on your own ruin.

“Consider, my dearest girl,” he continued in an accent of the softest kindness, “how entirely the future peace of Delville depends upon you! You have, it is true, placed a barrier between you that may, perhaps, never be surmounted—that certainly *never can*, if you, by imprudently forsaking my protection, throw yourself into the power of that vile, insidious deceiver, Delamain! But if my son and you are for
ever

ever divided by the step you have so lately taken, so well do I know his disposition, that to you alone I can look for the preservation of his intellects, and perhaps his life. He must behold you steady and collected, and he can then be made to blush for giving way to any transports of sorrow or resentment towards Mr. Delamain.—Serena, not even Philippa is more dear to my heart than you are! I behold in you the chosen of my son, and as a daughter I shall ever regard you, though you should remain, as now, unconnected with my family.”

Serena had at first been alarmed and surprised at the apparent displeasure of Lord Somerset; it restored to her mind some degree of the elasticity it had lost in deep and indulged sorrow, and fitted it to be more deeply

deeply affected by his generous kindness towards her. Her tears flowed in silence during most of the time he had been speaking; when he had concluded, she raised her streaming eyes to his face, saying—"Command me, my Lord, as you would were I indeed a daughter of your own! Harassed by sorrow as I have been, is it wonderful that my mind should be enervated, and that I should yield to a despair you shew me is criminal? I owe it to the dear, the generous Delville, to exert myself where he would be a sufferer from my weakness being indulged; but I conjure you, my Lord, to suffer me to depart from hence, and seek some asylum from the power of Delamain, that shall not injure the repose of my friends. You know not, Sir," she continued, with increasing earnestness, "you know

know not the malignancy of the spirit you would provoke by openly affording me your protection. Even the laws will, I fear, aid Mr. Delamain to insult you with a scandalous charge, and you will too probably be publicly accused of harbouring a runaway wife."

"If I am, Serena," returned Lord Somerset, calmly, "I shall but little regard the imputation. I have been accused by my friends of making an idol of the shade of honour; but I am not so devoted to its worship as not to feel at ease when my conscience tells me I am right, though the world should proclaim me wrong. But, my dear Serena, think not that in case Mr. Delamain should obtain a legal right to force you from me, I should hesitate to
carry

carry you out of England. The German and Italian States are still open to us, and with you, Philippa, and Emily, I could form a little paradise for myself in any quarter of the globe; yet I own I prefer the tranquillity I may enjoy in my own country: and to be immediately assured whether it is likely to be permanent, I shall write to my lawyer, and desire him to lay your case before some of the most celebrated civilians, and know their opinion of it."

"Your tranquillity, my Lord, must not be disturbed by me," said Serena, firmly. "If it be necessary, I can leave England alone. One of the friends of my earliest infancy is a professed Sister in a Monastery at Baden, and with her I can take refuge."

The

The mention of Baden awakened a recollection in the mind of Lord Somerfet that superseded even the affairs of Serena for a time; he remembered that the *soi-disant* Theresa Meliphan Delville, related in her letter that she had been brought up at Baden; and he hastily demanded of Serena if she had ever resided in that city, and if she knew Miss Meliphan.

“ I never was in Germany, my Lord,” replied Serena, “ but I have heard much of the young lady you mention.”

“ From my son?” cried Lord Somerfet, interrogatively. “ I fear he has been to blame in his affair with her.”

“ Only, my Lord, so far as a young man
can

can be esteemed blamable for errors into which he was betrayed by a female"—(Serena was about to pronounce the name of Delamain, but checking herself, added)—“by the most artful of all women, with beauty to fascinate, wit to attract, and a heart dead to every principle of honour. Oh, how often has Delville described to me the anguish he suffered (when his dream of passion vanished, and he beheld the woman he had engaged to marry, artful, selfish, and inconstant), at the thought of the evils into which he had plunged himself, and the disgrace in which he dreaded his name might be involved!”

Lord Somerset now proceeded to question Serena narrowly concerning every thing she knew of the unprincipled Theresa; and
every

every circumstance she had to relate, seemed to give to the good old man a fresh source of happiness and exultation in the worth of his son. He a thousand times thanked Serena for restoring to his mind its confidence in Delville—"Though," he added, "I deserve to suffer for having ever permitted my faith in Piercy to be shaken by art, or circumstances, however unfavourable. But the precipitation with which he quitted this country, and his total silence ever since to all his family, have led me into error.—I would he were returned!"

Serena *22/10/8*
Lord Somerset pronounced the last sentence with a sort of impatient sadness that extremely affected Serena; and she could not bear to tell him that in all probability his beloved son had already departed, on a hazardous

hazardous service, for Sweden, (a circumstance she had learned from Miss Delville); but his Lordship himself adverted to it, adding—"Just at present I believe his absence from England rather fortunate than otherwise; but I hope Mr. Delamain, finding himself disappointed in his hopes of brow-beating me into compliance with his wishes, may pursue his proposed plan of going into the Russian service."

Serena joined in the *wish*, but she had been too long the victim of sorrow to cherish *hope*; and shaking her head, said, with a mournful smile, that she feared Mr. Delamain said more than he ever meant to perform.

What

Further
CHAP. III.

Serena

“ But through the heart
 “ Should jealousy its poison once diffuse,
 “ 'Tis then delightful misery no more ;
 “ But agony unmix'd, incessant gall,
 “ Corroding every thought, and blasting all
 “ Love's paradise.”

THOMSON.

AS Mr. Delamain did not immediately commence his suit to recover his wife from the protection of Lord Somers, and as his child seemed entirely forgotten by him, Serena would have enjoyed a considerable

share of tranquillity, had not the conduct of Mrs. Powis been such as to give her, for the first time in her life, an idea of the miseries to which poverty and dependance too frequently subject the most deserving persons. Yet still there was nothing in it of which she could reasonably complain, severely as she felt the humiliation of submitting to the childish caprices in which the fair widow indulged herself.

Sometimes she would take it into her head, when she, Serena, and Miss Mortimer happened to be left to themselves, (which now often occurred, from Lord Somerset taking daily airings with Miss Delville), to enter into long whispering conversations with the latter lady, when, by frequently directing her eyes towards Serena, she
would

would plainly give her to understand that she was the subject of discourse, as well as the object of the titter that broke often from the lips of both ladies.

To this ridiculous affectation of laughter Serena had a decided aversion; and as she found it particularly pointed at herself, she generally retired to her own room soon after it began: but the moment she returned, she was assailed with peevish complaints of her unkind love for solitude, (which Mrs. Powis meant to express friendly solicitude), or by sneering observations on her reason for retiring.

Sometimes Serena was half inclined to believe Mrs. Powis had imbibed some suspicion of her supposed connection with

Delville; and she would have thought her jealous, had she ever betrayed the least symptom of particular partiality to her cousin:—but it never once entered her imagination that the polite attention paid to herself by the Count, was the cause of the lady's dissatisfaction, the expression of which she still endeavoured to believe was not meant to be so offensive, as from the irritable state of her feelings she found it to be.

For the behaviour of Miss Mortimer, however, she could find no excuse, nor even any palliation. That young lady most certainly encouraged the capricious humours of Mrs. Powis towards the innocent and unfortunate Serena; yet, in the absence of her friend, she spoke as if she pitied her
weakness

weakness of understanding, and narrowness of sentiment.

To Serena, whom she considered as an humble companion, Miss Mortimer did not take the trouble of exerting the fascinating powers of her wit, her elegance, or her sensibility; and unprejudiced by any of them, she, perhaps, saw her character in a truer light than even the penetrating mind of Lord Somerset enabled him to do. At the commencement of her visit, Miss Mortimer assiduously courted the affection of Miss Delville; but Philippa, mild, steady, and rational, though she could not deny admiration to her cousin's guest, was not one of those young ladies whose sensibilities, ripened into full luxuriance by a residence with boarding-school misses, can

give, on the acquaintance of an hour, the title of a bosom friend to a person whom they only know to be handsome or plausible. Miss Mortimer, therefore, was disappointed in her hope of engaging the confidence of Miss Delville, (which for particular reasons she very much wished to do), and was obliged to be content with possessing the admiration of all parties, and the friendship of Mrs. Powis.

Sir Piercy Delville had been ten days at Elfsneur, and still there was no prospect of a ship sailing for any part of the British coast, when he took the sudden resolution of writing to his father, and laying open his whole mind on the subject of Serena: but he had scarcely done this when he recollected that, by the same mode in which his

his letter would be conveyed to England, he might reach it himself. His ardent spirit soon engaged him in the adoption of his scheme of travelling overland homewards, though his tendernefs for Serena made him (apprehensive of some accident to himself) immediately difpatch the letter he had written to Lord Somerfet.

In leaving Elfineur, Delville had refolved to lofe no time upon his journey; but he foon found that to the refliefs fpirit of unhappinefs, he united in himfelf the indolence of hopelefs deſpondency. He lingered on his way, (for he travelled on horfeback, a mode common in the country through which he was paſſing), and was often more fatigued when he had completed a day's journey of three leagues, than he had been

when carrying expresse*, though he had frequently travelled more than ten times the distance without rest, and almost without refreshment. But the irritable feelings of Delville preyed upon the strength of his body, and in the languor that now stole over his frame, he lost much of that decisive character of thought and action in which his father had ever taken so much pride, as an attribute of his beloved son.

Amidst his solitary and often painful

* It is customary in the Swedish service, frequently to send dispatches from the fleet by an Officer of the Navy, who travels night and day till he reaches the Court. The Officer so employed carries a badge of his embassy on his person; and should he not be able to procure post-horses at any of the proper stages, or his horse tire on the way, he is entitled to impress any horse he meets with, which is considered as employed in the service of the State.

reflections,

reflections, it did not escape him that his now returning to England could not possibly answer any purpose less unpleasant than torturing the feeling heart of his adored Serena, since he had made a firm resolution, (though pride would not permit him to avow it to Mr. Delamain), not again to speak of love to her till she had attained that age at which a woman is supposed to be entirely uncontrouled in the article of marriage. This Mr. Delamain had promised should be the time when the restriction he had laid on himself, not to see or write to Serena, should terminate; and the generous Delville, little imagining his rival had so soon violated his engagement, resolved to take no advantage of him by embracing an opportunity of pleading his passion, whilst he felt that to refrain

from doing so, he must not behold its object.

Impressed with an idea of the inutility as well as the pain of a return to England under the present state of circumstances and of time, Sir Piercy, instead of proceeding towards home, turned his steps towards Berlin; where, having established a correspondence with the same banker who had transacted his pecuniary matters when he had before visited Germany, he purchased a serviceable horse, and set out upon a tour, neither of pleasure or improvement, but in the hope of wearing away less heavily the time of his absence from Serena.

The indolence, once so foreign to his character, but which had of late become a
part

part of it, made Delville, to avoid the exertion of chusing his route, begin his travels by visiting the common places of resort in the German States; but he never entered a town; he never viewed any place or building worthy of observation, that it did not call to mind the companion with whom he had last seen them. In reflecting on his former connection with the fair demoniac Theresa, (for he considered her, now that her vices were known to him, as nothing better), there was nothing for which Delville could seriously condemn himself, there was nothing he detested so much to remember; for it is pretty generally the case, that men can, with much greater patience, bear to be reminded of a fault they have committed, than of a weakness to which they have yielded.

Those constant remembrances of the beautiful but artful Mrs. Fitzpatrick would probably have hurried Sir Piercy from Germany with the same precipitation that he left Denmark, had he not recollected that he had never been in Saxony with her ; and, indeed, had only passed rapidly through it in company with two young Englishmen, who were galloping over Germany, intending afterwards to pass over Italy with the same celerity, and complete the grand tour within a year.

Delville made no considerable stay in any place till he arrived at the town of D—— ; the environs and villages about which being peculiarly beautiful, he resolved to remain some weeks, making daily excursions round it.

One

One morning that he had rode out at a much earlier hour than usual, to visit a Convent at some distance from D——, he by some mistake lost his way, and travelled several miles in unfrequented paths, which, some hours after noon, led him at length into the vicinity of the Convent he was going to when he set out. Having emerged from the shade of woods that had for some distance prevented him from seeing more than a few yards before him, Delville checked his horse, and stood still, to indulge himself with gazing at one of the most beautiful scenes he had ever beheld.

At the foot of the acclivity on which he was placed, a considerable brook extended itself into a broad, shallow pool, on the border of which, and under the shade of a
clump

clump of lime-trees, were a number of Saxon girls, some employed in washing, and others in spreading some pieces of linen to dry. A little beyond them was a village, which, though it consisted only of ten or twelve cottages, united to the exquisite neatness of Holland, the picturesque beauty of situation of many of the villages in the Swiss Cantons. Above it, on a rising ground, was the Convent which Delville had designed to visit, the majestic grandeur of whose structure admirably contrasted the simplicity of the objects in the vale.

There was something in the scene particularly interesting to Delville, for it reminded him of one he had often contemplated on his way to the cottage where Serena had been secluded; and, desirous to
prolong

prolong as much as he could the agreeable sensations he now experienced, he took out his pencil, and in a blank leaf of his pocket-book began to make a sketch of the prospect before him.

No place could possibly have been worse calculated for taking a view on horseback, than the one chosen by Delville. On either side the road was thickly shaded by trees, and he was only a few feet from the commencement of a descent so steep and rugged, that it required the precaution of an Alpine mule to reach the bottom in safety. At the foot of the hill the road, if it might be called such, turned abruptly to the right; and exactly fronting was a rude fence of loose piled stones, surmounted with bushes, that divided it from the bank of the pool.

Sir Piercy had not long been in this hazardous situation, when the report of a gun close to his horse's ear so much startled the animal, that, making a violent plunge, it galloped down the hill, and, unable to check its speed, when it had reached the bottom it attempted to leap the fence, and failing, fell amongst the loose stones. Delville had instinctively seized the mane of the horse (the bridle was beyond his reach) on its first taking fright, and thus saved himself from being immediately thrown, to fall with increased violence, (from the weight of the horse being on him), on a spot that rendered it wonderful he was not dashed to pieces; and which, as it was, entirely deprived him of all sensation

Whe..

When Delville awoke as from the sleep of death, he found himself stretched at length on a bed, but where he knew not; nor could he recal the slightest recollection of how he came there. After a few minutes spent in silent but vain efforts to connect his ideas, he tried to raise himself in the bed; but a violent pain in his breast seemed to forbid the exertion, and he now discovered that his head was bound round with bandages, which the throbbing of his temples, and the aching stiffness of his eyelids convinced him were not unnecessary. Every limb too appeared bruised and sore, but particularly his right arm, which was so totally useless that he fancied it broken. With some difficulty, however, he extended his left hand, drew aside the curtain of his bed, and tried to examine his apartment.

ment. It was a very small one; but his eyes were attracted to the most remote part of it, where, conversing in a low voice with a person in the habit of an ecclesiastic, he beheld a female form, tall, slight, and graceful, attired in black, and seeming by her gestures deeply interested in the subject of discourse.

An idea arose to his disordered fancy that this female was Serena. Such had been her dress when he had last seen her; so delicate, so emaciated had been her fair form; soft as those that now indistinctly struck on his ear, were the accents with which she had spoken:—he tried to speak, but could only feebly pronounce the name of Serena; and, from weakness, dropping the

the curtain he was holding back, he could see her no longer.

The faint sounds that had issued from the lips of Delville, had been unheard by the persons in his room; but in a few moments the ecclesiastic advanced to the bedside, and began to prepare for performing the offices of his holy function. Delville heeded him not, but cast an anxious look round his chamber; but the female to whom his fancy had given the person and voice of Serena, had quitted it, and he found, on attempting it, that he had not voice to enquire for her. It was in vain that by every sign he could think of, he endeavoured to make the old priest understand that he wished again to behold his fair companion; he was most provokingly

ingly stupid, and Delville, leaving him to perform his superstitious ceremonies at his leisure, soon sunk into a sort of lethargic doze.

He awoke from this yet weaker than he had been before; and as he was laying perfectly still, with his eyes closed, he heard a little rustling by his bed-side, and immediately—"Oh Delville! so long, so hopelessly beloved! do we meet now only that I may behold thy last parting agonies?" was pronounced in a tone of the most exquisite sensibility; but the voice was not Serena's, nor did Delville remember ever to have heard it before.

He opened his eyes, and beheld a pair of the most lovely azure ones filled with
tears,

tears, and gazing on him with a tenderness, that, had she not been the only person in the room, would have assured him the speaker was the interesting mourner he had before seen.

A soft blush stole over her pale but finely formed cheek when convinced, by his looking at her, that Delville was sensible; but instantly dropping on her knees, the fervency of piety with which she returned thanks to the Virgin Mary for his restoration, proved that her heart was the spring from whence originated her devotion.

Delville smiled; but when he attempted to utter a few words, the pain in his breast became so excruciating, that after one effort he was obliged to desist; nor for three days afterwards,

afterwards, and then only with great uneasiness, was he able to articulate intelligibly. Once, when his fair nurse (for so she proved herself), presented him a medicine, he took her hand, saying faintly—"Who are you?—Ah, 'tis some benevolent angel that is thus careful of a stranger!"

"A woman! a mere woman!" replied his gentle attendant, in German, with a smile of infinite softness.

A few minutes afterwards she addressed him by the name of Delville.

"You know my name!" he exclaimed, with a look that seemed to mean a demand of how she knew it.

"Oh

"Oh yes!" she answered.

"You have then seen me before this fatal accident?" said Delville.

"Often," she replied, with a deep sigh.

"Yet I cannot remember you," Delville rejoined.

"No, no, I attracted not your notice when last we met."

"You speak the language, yet something whispers me you are not a German," said Delville, pondering.

"Something deceives you—I *am* a German," returned the lady.

"But

“ But your name?” said Delville.

“ It will not serve to recal me to your recollection.”

It will at least serve to recal you to my presence: so long accustomed to the watchful care of a ministering angel, I should think myself abandoned of Heaven if you were long absent.”

“ I will not be unnecessarily so.”

“ If I should want you,” Delville returned, “ how shall I call you?”

“ Call me Caroline.”

“ You

“ You have another name ? ” said Delville, interrogatively.

“ I had,” replied the fair unknown, sighing.

Notwithstanding the curiosity of Delville was strained to the highest pitch, he had not strength to ask any more questions; and kissing the soft white hand of Caroline, who was now seated by his bed, he laid his cheek on it, and soon fell into a slumber.

CHAP. IV.

———“ He found

“ She was the same, the daughter of his friend.

———“ Who can speak

“ The mingled passions that surpris'd his heart,

“ And through his nerves in shivering transport ran?”

THOMSON.

WHEN Delville again awoke, he found the lovely and compassionate Caroline still sitting beside him. She had not withdrawn her hand, for fear of disturbing him, whilst he had slept; but she now did so, gently enquiring how he felt himself.

In

In truth it was scarcely possible for him to feel worse, so miserably had he been bruised and shattered by his accident. His right arm had, indeed, been broken, and had been set during the insensibility attending the severe blow his head had received from falling amongst the stones; he, however, told Caroline that he was somewhat better, as the giddiness he had before felt had now subsided.

In a short time a surgeon made his appearance, who confirmed the hopes the tender Caroline entertained of Delyville's recovery, but desired him to remain perfectly quiet; and enjoined his fair nurse not to permit him to speak.

This was a severe injunction to poor

Caroline. To hear the voice of Delville, though only in incoherent ravings of Serena, was to her a source of indescribable pleasure, and had amply repaid her for the many tedious hours she had spent watching over him. Now that his senses were restored, that he spoke to her with such tender and soothing softness, she was forbidden to listen to him, and her only consolation rested in continually seeing and serving him.

For ten days Caroline continued her silent and assiduous care of Sir Piercy, and at the end of that time had the satisfaction of seeing him sufficiently restored to be able to sit up for some hours each day. The contusion on his breast still rendered talking extremely painful to him, and he yet scarcely

scarcely ever spoke but to thank his kind attendant for her goodness. His mind was, however, constantly employed in endeavouring to recollect where he had before seen Caroline, and to account for the touching exclamation he had heard her make on the day he recovered his senses. In its purport he could not be mistaken; and though he felt the subject was too delicate a one to be lightly mentioned, it gave to his behaviour to Caroline an unspeakable tenderness, which soothed her feelings without oppressing her with the idea of her attachment being discovered by its object; who, from his frequent mention of the name of Serena during his delirium, she was convinced must be totally indifferent to her.

Her curiosity was as strongly interested concerning Serena as Delville's was concerning herself; but her's seemed destined to remain unsatisfied, whilst a trifling circumstance served to procure the gratification of his.

One day, about three weeks after his accident, as Caroline was bending over him, fastening a scarf that was to support his broken arm, Delville suddenly impressed a kiss upon her cheek. Though the impulse that prompted this little action was a hasty one, it was nevertheless one of the purest nature—the offspring of gratitude, only enlivened by having for its object a lovely woman, still in the bloom of youth, though her features wore an expression of thoughtful sadness,
that

that seemed to proclaim her acquainted, at least, with the sorrows and misfortunes of life. The dress of a Nun of the order of Mercy which she wore, while it could not conceal the graces of her figure, gave something so interesting to her appearance, that it was impossible not to feel for her both love and reverence.

In the kiss of Delville Caroline knew there could not be that species of love she could ever have wished to inspire; and she thought there was so little of the respect she felt she deserved, that her face was crimsoned over, and dropping the scarf from her hand, she said, with emotion, in English—"You are very cruel, Mr. Delville!"

This was the first word Caroline had pronounced in his native language, and her accent rendered the tones of her voice familiar.

“ Good Heaven, Miss Marley !” he exclaimed; for in his gentle companion he immediately recognized the daughter of his friend, the English merchant, at Baden.

The anger of Caroline was now lost in confusion, as she doubted not Delville would remember the various occurrences at Baden, which she feared must have betrayed her partiality; the next moment tears sprung to her eyes, and retreating from him to the window, she sat down, and leaned her head against a table near it, to conceal her emotion.

Delville

Delville with difficulty arose, and following her, took her hand, saying, tenderly—
“Dearest Miss Marley, compose this agitation; and believe me, not the slightest idea of disrespect to you ever entered my mind, even when I was ignorant that in you I beheld the daughter of my much esteemed friend.”

Perceiving that Caroline’s tears still continued to flow, and that she endeavoured to withdraw her hand, he resumed—

“Tell me, my lovely friend, that you forgive the folly which has so offended your delicacy; and think not that I am so mean a villain as to take advantage of your being unprotected at present by Mr. Marley.—
No, Caroline; it is not for him who owes
his

his present existence to your generous humanity, if he has a particle of honour remaining in his breast, to abuse the gentleness of your nature.

Caroline would preferably have doubted the honour of her dearest relative, than Delville's; but had she even been inclined still to resent, the alarm she felt on raising her eyes, to see him almost sinking with pain and weakness, would not have permitted her. She started on her feet, and aiding Delville again to reach the seat he had left, she found all the ill consequences of her precipitate conduct.

In rising to follow her to the window, Delville, regardless of his own misfortunes, had not observed that the scarf that should
have

have supported his arm, lay on the floor at his feet; and from the intolerable pain that he felt in his fractured limb, Sir Piercy had little doubt that the bones were again disunited, while his having spoke so much, and with such earnestness, had brought on a fit of coughing, which threatened the worst consequences from the contusion in his breast.

It was some days before Delville was again able to speak to his fair nurse above two or three words; but as soon as he regained sufficient strength, he eagerly demanded of Caroline the reason of her being in her present situation.

Hard was the task his wishes imposed on her, as to relate the whole of her story

was impossible; and to suppress a part, without giving rise to a suspicion of her doing so, was, she found, extremely difficult.

It has already been said that the young and lovely daughter of Mr. Marley had, very early in her acquaintance with Mr. Delville, yielded to the tender susceptibility of her heart, and formed an attachment to him, which she had innocently confided to the treacherous bosom of Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who immediately formed the design she afterwards so successfully executed, of depriving her friend of him whose heart it was the first wish of her's to inspire with a fondness as pure and as ardent as her own.

Theresa, almost to the very last, had
soothed

foothed her unsuspecting friend with feigned accounts of Delville's partiality; and when she saw herself betrayed by the artful creature she had trusted, and the man she loved entirely lost to her, a melancholy seized on her, which in a few weeks unsettled her intellects.

Mr. Marley, distracted at the situation in which he beheld his darling daughter, suffered severely in his health; but that did not prevent him from carrying her over most part of Germany, France, and Italy for change of air and scene, and at length had the satisfaction of seeing her reason restored, and her constitution, which had been much injured, nearly returned to its former strength. But in recovering her intellects, Caroline also recollected the cause of their derangement,

derangement, and formed a determination to retire to a Convent. This Mr. Marley strongly combatted; and, ere the worthy old man sunk into the grave sorrow had opened for him, he prevailed on her to give him a most solemn promise never to take the monastic vows.

Though Caroline was thus restricted from becoming a Nun, she assumed the habit and occupations of one; and as the Sisterhood of Mercy, by their attendance on the sick, offered to her view the most eligible mode of spending the large fortune left her by her father, that she adopted.

She had for some time resided in the Society of Ursulines, whose Convent Delville was going to when he met with his accident;

accident; and had that morning gone down to the village to visit a woman in the last stage of a consumption, who was both her patient and pensioner; and a few moments after Sir Piercy's fall, was summoned by the peasants to his assistance.

Words cannot describe the feelings of the tender Caroline when, in the bruised and bleeding object to whose pain she was called to minister relief, she recognized the man whom for years she had loved with silent, unabating fervour; whose loss had first reduced her to madness, and then driven her from the society she was formed to ornament.

In the case of almost any other human being, Caroline would have trusted to her
own

own skill in medicine (for she was not at first aware of the broken bone) for his restoration to health. Not that Caroline was of that hard, unfeeling disposition, less to commiserate the misfortunes of the poorest beggar, than the only son of Lord Somerset; but she felt a throbbing emotion at her heart, which convinced her that her hand could never steadily apply a remedy to the wounds of Delville, and she immediately sent a peasant to the nearest town for a surgeon.

Till he arrived, she never for an instant lost sight of Delville, who remained in a state little removed from total insensibility; and when the surgeon declared his life depended on the care that was taken of him, she took up her abode in the cottage, whither

whither he had been carried, and never left him till his senses were restored.

It was not till several conversations on the subject had taken place between Caroline and Delville, that the latter was made acquainted with those particulars of the last six years of the life of his fair nurse; and then it was only by repeatedly questioning her that he discovered how severely she had suffered from her fatal attachment to him.

Caroline would have died sooner than have intentionally betrayed the secret of her heart; but her nature was so artless, her manner so ingenuous, that, without designing it, her whole soul was laid open to him who reigned in its affections. He
was,

was, however, too delicate to give the slightest hint of her partiality being known to him; at the same time it gave a softness to his behaviour towards her that was ill calculated to remove the impression her heart had received.

It was near a month after the commencement of his *sejour* in the Saxon village, that Sir Piercy first thought of writing to his family, to inform them where he was, and also to intimate his intention of remaining some time longer in Germany. At the time he wrote, his wounds and bruises were almost cured, and there appeared every probability of his being in a few days in a situation to travel: but previous to his commencing his journey, he rode out to take the air, which convinced him he could
not

not yet proceed with safety, as the slightest exertion brought on a spitting of blood, which seriously alarmed the surgeon who attended him, and almost distracted the affectionate Caroline.

During the convalescence of Delville, this lovely and unfortunate girl had been endeavouring to reconcile her mind to the cruel idea of parting from him; and it is difficult to say whether the present retardment of his journey gave her most pain from the consideration of its cause, or pleasure from the certainty that she should still be permitted to see him daily, to contribute to his ease, and receive the sweet tribute of his gratitude for her attentions.

CHAP. V.

WHEN the letter Sir Piercy had written to his father from Elfsneur, arrived at the castle, the family remained in much the same situation it had done for several weeks before. So gently progressive had been proceedings there, that no change appeared to have taken place, though time was insensibly leading on to events of moment.

Mr. Delamain had commenced his operations against Lord Somerset, who had taken
the

the advice of the most eminent lawyers concerning Serena's affairs; but could effect nothing, as she persisted in opposing any measures being taken to dissolve the fatal engagement into which she had entered. But for the entreaties and persuasions of her venerable protector, Serena, reckless of life and peace, would patiently have yielded herself up to the man whose property she considered herself.

“Why, my Lord,” would she say to him, “should I involve you in difficulties by persevering in a separation from Mr. Delamain? It is true that happiness, or even tranquillity, can never be mine in an union with him; but the former I can never hope, in any situation, to attain: and why should I, to preserve the latter during
the

the short period I have to live, dislodge it from the bosoms of my friends? Sorrow and I have long been companions, and only death can part us! That the period which will do so, is fast arriving, is my only solace."

That Serena spoke truly when she uttered this mournful prophecy, was but too evident to the generous old man, who experienced for her a fondness even greater than for his own daughter. Philippa, indeed, possessed a large portion of his affection; but there was a sentiment of pity mingled with his tenderness for Serena, which gave it superior force and energy.

By almost imperceptible degrees the heart of the amiable Count de Melanville had been withdrawn from its hopeless attachment

ment to Miss Delville; but it was only to be fixed with greater promise of permanency on her cousin, whom, with all her caprices, all her errors, he could not refrain from loving. He saw that she had no faults but those which arose from a wrong mode of education, and a disposition too warm and hasty in its attachments, and too keen in its resentments.

Nothing now could possibly have impeded the happiness of Mrs. Powis, but a perverseness she assumed through the arts of Miss Mortimer, who, for some reason she did not declare, endeavoured to prejudice her unsuspicious friend against Serena, by continually representing to her that that young lady was endeavouring to ensnare the affections of the Count.

In

In the meantime the Chevalier Bayar had insensibly renewed his attentions to Miss Delville, who no longer received them with coldness or disapprobation; and, confiding in the perfect consciousness of his own upright designs, and the generosity of Lord Somerset, he hesitated not to entreat from his Lordship the hand of his lovely daughter.

The good Peer had seen too much of their mutual attachment to throw the least damp on the hopes of the Chevalier; at the same time he informed him that he could not dispense with paying the compliment to his son, of consulting him on the disposal of his sister.

Sir Piercy was accordingly written to,
and

and pressingly entreated both by Lord Somerset and Philippa, to come over immediately.

This letter, which was directed to his banker at Berlin, from whose house Delville had written when there, was sent after him to the village where he was confined; and it was in answer to it, that he wrote the letter before mentioned, in which, after slightly mentioning his accident, he thus expressed himself:—

“ Nothing could be more highly flattering to me than your consulting me on my sister’s affairs, did it not seem to intimate a doubt of my giving the full weight of all my influence with Philippa, to promote

the wishes of Bayar. I have long known the worth of the Chevalier; long have I been honoured by his friendship, and for ever shall I preserve that regard for him which prompts me to wish my sister to be more amiable, more lovely, and even richer than I know it will be your pride to make her, for a man whom poverty never could humiliate, and whom wealth cannot render arrogant.

“ I must, however, conjure you to excuse my absence from the castle on the occasion of Philippa’s marriage; the fatal intelligence your letter conveyed to me, of the total loss of Serena’s regards, has rendered me unfit to enjoy such a meeting as that you propose. If she had the love for me I hoped she had, she would also have had
sufficient

sufficient courage to withstand the attacks of the treacherous miscreant to whom she has united herself. My attachment to her was the charm that sweetened my existence whilst I thought she returned it; now that she has proved the reverse, I must endeavour to regain my indifference, since a son of your's can never cherish a passion for a married woman!—When I accepted the trust her noble brother assigned me, I designed most religiously to perform all that was required of a guardian; but the claim of a husband supercedes mine, and I have only to regulate her pecuniary concerns.

“ The small estate bequeathed me by my aunt Sampson, I always designed for Serena; and it is my request that you will take such measures as may be proper to secure to

her sole and separate use the income; which, though now only four hundred pounds per annum, will, in a few years, increase considerably in value.

“ For myself, I shall still continue to wander about Germany for some time; and it is not improbable that I may, when I return, be accompanied by the daughter of a dear and respectable friend lately deceased, who may claim that paternal regard you will not deny to her youth, her misfortunes, and her virtues.”

As the assignment of the Sampson estate to Serena must be made known to her, Lord Somersset, though somewhat averse, presented this letter to her for her perusal.

At

At first the sight of Delville's writing gave her an emotion of pleasure for which she could scarcely account, which was soon converted into agony by reading his expressions concerning herself.

“Cruel, cruel Delville!” she exclaimed, whilst her tears almost blinded her, and half choked her utterance, “cruel Delville, thus to aggravate sufferings already intolerable — to add *your* reproaches to those I daily make myself, for an act for which I alone am to feel the punishment! Your indifference to my destiny has already begun, since your affections are so easily transferred!”

The generosity of Delville would have excited the most lively gratitude in the mind

of Serena, but for the hint of his having made a second choice; but now it seemed like mockery to provide for the support of an existence which he had contributed to render a burthen to her.

But Serena, tender, amiable, and just, could not, when the first emotions occasioned by his letter had subsided, so cruelly wrong Delville as even mentally to accuse him of having deserted her, when her own precipitancy had placed an insurmountable barrier betwixt them; still, notwithstanding, the loss of Delville's affection, and her own hopeless unhappiness preyed on her mind, and her frame (of late violently shaken by the slightest agitations) so rapidly sunk under it, that the physician who attended her, recommended her to try the air of Portugal,

Portugal, but desired that a consultation of physicians should first be held, concerning the expediency of the measure.

Lord Somerset immediately resolved on a journey to London, accompanied by the fair invalid, Miss Mortimer (who was now become almost one of the family), Mrs. Powis, and Miss Delville. All matters had been arranged for Philippa's marriage taking place in a fortnight; and though it was now put off, from her unwillingness to have her nuptials celebrated when the friend of her heart was manifestly hastening to the tomb, the Chevalier could not with any propriety be excluded from the party to town. Nor, indeed, did Miss Delville by any means wish to be separated from her lover; his tenderness never failed to sooth

the anxiety that often almost distracted her; she felt for the fate of her beloved Serena, and the gentleness of his manners, and the kindness of his heart, rendered him a companion infinitely more pleasing to the lovely invalid than any other person, except Miss Delville.

As the hectic complaints of Serena gained ground, her spirits became more tranquil than they had long been; and the attentions of her friends, together with the interest they all so warmly felt in her recovery, gave a placid sweetness to her behaviour that more strongly attached them to her. Even Mrs. Powis, touched at beholding the patient sweetness with which she supported her illness, forgot all her former prejudice against her; at the same time she endeavoured to

to atone for it by the most sedulous attention to her during their journey, though this journey divided her from De Melanville.

The separation was not, however, of long duration, as the party had scarcely arrived in town, when he reached the hotel at which they had taken apartments, alledging that he had now nothing to induce his stay in Yorkshire, and much to urge him to visit London.

The appeal that his countenance made to Mrs. Powis as he said this, was perfectly understood; and in a very few days, with much generosity on one side, and delicacy on the other, their plans were so arranged that only the sanction of Lord Somerset,

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(which

(which was joyfully given), remained to be acquired previous to their marriage.

Mrs. Powis was precipitate in every thing, and rested not till she had given De Melanville a legal title to that fortune, the sole value of which was, in her eyes, raising him to merited affluence.

Immediately on her nuptials Mrs. Powis removed from the house Lord Somerset had taken for the term of his stay in town, to one of her own, to which she invited Miss Mortimer to accompany her; but that young lady rather preferring the society of Miss Delville, "*the dear, amiable Serena, and her charming old lover,*" Lord Somerset, it was decided that she should accompany them abroad, whither the Faculty
were

were unanimous in desiring Serena might be conveyed.

On the very day previous to their commencing their travels, Miss Delville having walked out with Bayar, to take leave of her cousin Emily, and Lord Somerset being engaged in settling a correspondence with his banker, Serena was left alone; but had not long been so when a servant announced a visiter, and Mr. Delamain entered the room.

Surprise, and a terror unaccountable to herself, made Serena utter a faint cry, and gasping for breath, lean against the arm of the sofa on which she was sitting. Her alarm, and evident illness, callous as was the heart of Delamain, could not fail of exciting some

pity for the hapless object, whom dread of being subjected to his power had nearly reduced to insensibility. He sat down by her, and taking her hand, which she dared not withdraw, though she trembled at his touch—"How is this, Serena?" said he. "Are you really unwell, or is it your abhorrence of me that causes this sinking of your frame?"

A deep and tremulous sigh was the only answer he received, Serena turning away her face to conceal the struggles of her heart against her sense of propriety, which told her that Delamain was her husband.

"Tell me, Madam," he resumed, finding she did not reply, "what am I to infer
4 from

from the preparations I find are making for your removal from hence?"

It was with the utmost difficulty that Serena assumed courage to answer—"I am going abroad."

"By whom accompanied?"

"By Lord Somerfet and his family," returned she, with some little firmness and composure.

"Without consulting *me*, Madam!" resumed Mr. Delamain, haughtily; adding—"Your matrimonial duties do not seem to interfere much with your decisions!"

"Have they any right to do so, Sir?"
enquired

enquired Serena, with an effort to assume the appearance of fortitude she did not possess. "Was it not the express condition of a marriage I shall never cease to regret, that I should be unmolested by your presence?"

"At lovers' perjuries Jove laughs!" returned Mr. Delamain, smiling maliciously.

"But give me leave to remind you that engagements, mutually entered into, must, to be binding, be mutually adhered to; and that you have not adhered to your's, is proved by my finding you in the apartments of Lord Somerset."

"In that, Mr. Delamain, I have violated no engagement but one I entered into with

with myself, to give up all connection with a family you detested. To *you* I made no promises. Fool that I was to confide in those uttered by a man who had profaned every thing sacred, in the treachery by which I was betrayed!"

The feelings of Serena were wound up to a pitch of agony as she pronounced this reproach. All her past sorrows, her present misery, the hapless destiny of her child, and, above all, Delville, crowded to her imagination, and in bitterness of spirit she could have cursed the specious cause of all her misfortunes.

Delamain was a master of human nature; he saw that the indignation that swelled in her breast must be allowed to vent
itself

himself in reproaches, and when wearied by exertion, she might easily be led, through fear, or an idea of being right in submitting, to every measure he thought proper for her to adopt; one of the principal of which was, to conceal herself with him from the knowledge of Lord Somers. To effect this, he humbled his spirit (more proud and irritable than ever it had before been) to reason with Serena, and endeavour to convince her that she had no right to separate herself from him.

“To what purpose,” said he, “was the priest permitted to unite our hands, if we are to live always divided? Is it possible that the generous, the upright Serena should consent to the celebration of a sacred ceremony, with a design of only mocking Heaven

Heaven and me, by taking vows she never meant to keep, and offering me the name of rights whose reality she meant to withhold?"

"Oh Mr. Delamain!" cried Serena, "is this language for you to hold? you, whose profanation of a sacred ceremony betrayed, by a mockery of Heaven, a helpless woman to everlasting misery on earth, and an unsuspecting friend to an untimely grave!"

Mr. Delamain expected revilings, but not that his own words would be so touchingly applied to the purpose of his condemnation, and for some moments he felt irresolute, and almost abashed; but love, revenge, and pride, the great springs of all

all his actions, conspired to renovate his sinking resolution.

Serena had ever been, since his first knowledge of her, the object of his most fervent adoration; she had fondly loved him when she thought him honourable, and had confessed that there was a time when she could have pardoned his injuries—a declaration he thought proper to take in a sense very different from the proper one, and attribute to her subsequent passion for Delville. Sir Piercy had supplanted him in her affections; from both him and Lord Somerset he had encountered the keenness of reproof, and the stings of contempt. They had reprobated his villany, protected his victim, and despised himself!

These

These were offences to stir up all the evil passions under the controul of pride and revenge, in the mind of Mr. Delamain. Their action gave a violence to his conduct in the remainder of the interview with Serena, that completely vanquished the spirits she had been endeavouring to collect to oppose him; and pale, trembling, sickness, grief, and terror, combining to shatter her delicate frame and enervated mind, she desired him to do as he pleased with her: and patiently resigning herself to him, he was leading her down stairs to a carriage he had in waiting, when Lord Somerset, leaning on the arm of Bayar (like his evil genius), met him. He grasped Serena's hand more firmly, and was quickening his steps, when the venerable Peer, intercepting his passage, demanded with a resolute

resolute air and tone of voice, by what authority he was conveying that lady from her home?

"By an authority, my Lord," replied Mr. Delamain, with his usual effrontery, "of which you and I entertain ideas so diametrically opposite, that the question of its existence would take up more time in discussing, than I can at present throw away upon it."

It was certainly not impossible to irritate the temper of Lord Somerset beyond all possibility of resisting the impulses of his anger;—he seized Mr. Delamain by the collar, and, notwithstanding his age and infirmities, would have hurled him from the stairs into the street, had not the fall of

Serena,

Serena, who sunk without motion into the arms of the Chevalier, called his entire attention to her. The sight of Lord Somerset, at the moment when she was about to abandon the protection his generous and more than paternal kindness had afforded her, was too much for her; and laying her hand on his arm, as if to stop his passing her, she fainted.

Notwithstanding her insensibility, Mr. Delamain seemed resolute to persevere in his design of immediately taking Serena from the protection of her friends; and was, with that intention, taking her in his arms, when Bayar, who neither knew him, or what was his business, put him quietly on one side, and was proceeding with his helpless charge to Lord Somerset's dining-room, when

when Mr. Delamain, haughtily making known his claim as a husband, desired him to spare his officiousness.

“ I am the lady’s husband ! ” he loudly and angrily repeated.

“ It may be so,” returned Bayar, with an undisguised scorn, caused by the unfeeling behaviour of Delamain, and still proceeding up stairs. “ I am ignorant whether there is any law in England that gives you authority over Miss Hennington, but I feel that humanity calls on me to protect and assist her ; and I know that the laws of honour demand that I should give you satisfaction for offending you.”

By this time the whole party had reached
the

the dining-room, and one of the maids of the house coming in to her assistance, Serena was soon restored to recollection; and looking round her, a faint smile stole over her lovely countenance on perceiving Lord Somerset standing beside her; and pressing his hand to her lips, with all the fervour of affectionate gratitude that glowed in her heart, she softly returned thanks to Heaven that she was still permitted to remain under his protection.

The servant was now desired to quit the room; and Lord Somerset approaching Mr. Delamain, who, almost frantic with rage, was pacing up and down the apartment, muttering curses, desired to know if he had any commands for him?

The

The specious politeness of Mr. Delamain was entirely lost in the whirl of contending passions that now distracted his mind; and in a manner even brutally rude, he replied, that he did not desire to have any thing to say to him.

“Then, Sir,” returned the indignant Peer, “I would have you recollect that these apartments I consider as mine, and can very well dispense with your company in them.”

So plain speaking it was impossible even for Mr. Delamain to affect to misunderstand, and furiously declaring that he would not leave the room without his wife, he advanced to take Serena's hand; but agonized by terror and distress of mind, she
screamed

screamed, and threw herself into the arms of Bayar for protection.

What little moderation Mr. Delamain's passion had permitted him to retain, all vanished at beholding this sight; he loaded both Serena and the Chevalier with the grossest insults, and endeavoured to force her, insensible as his rage had now rendered her, from the supporting arms of her friend.

Though possessing a gentleness of manner and disposition not often to be discovered in the characters of men, Bayar's was a proud and indignant spirit. The latter had already been raised by the cruelty of Mr. Delamain to Serena, and his insolence to the respectable Lord Somerset; but his pride was roused for himself, and his

VOL. III. G emotion

emotion was so great as to render him incapable of articulating, and almost of giving the necessary assistance to the fainting Serena. But his was not a spirit of fierceness that, prompt to blaze at every trifling offence, evaporates in gusts of loud and violent passion; his indignation was not turbulent, but it was serious, and, in a case like this, unappeasable. Had not the situation of Serena presented so powerful a claim on his humanity, he might have been hurried into some act of violence towards the insulting Delamain; but as it was, without pronouncing a syllable, he took Serena in his arms, and carried her to her own dressing-room, followed by Lord Somerset: notwithstanding the vehement remonstrances of Mr. Delamain, and even his efforts to stop their progress, Bayar,
who

who had more personal strength than most men, bearing his insensible charge, and with the other arm obliging his opponent to keep his distance.

In a short time Serena again revived, and Bayar then returned to the room where he had left Mr. Delamain; but Lord Somerset had already taken the precaution of sending his own man to inform that gentleman that any claims he had to make on any member of that family, must be conveyed through Mr. T——, of Gray's Inn.

Mr. Delamain accordingly left the house; but from a neighbouring coffee-house sent a challenge in the evening to the Chevalier Bayar, having learned his name from the servants.

Lord Somerset, who expected no less, had given orders to his valet to receive any letters that came that evening directed to the Chevalier, and this one was accordingly brought to him. It was not with any intention of suppressing a challenge, should any such arrive, that Lord Somerset had given those orders, but in order to have an opportunity for beginning a conversation with Bayar on this subject.

As soon as his Lordship received Mr. Delamain's note, he carried it himself to the room where Bayar and Miss Delville were sitting; and telling his daughter that Serena wished to see her, on her leaving the room, he presented the paper to the Chevalier.

Bayar

Bayar read it, and put it in his pocket with an air of perfect indifference, that would have contradicted the idea of its being a challenge with any person less intimately acquainted with the cool steadiness of his young friend, than was the venerable Lord Somerset; who now said, interrogatively—
“I am not mistaken in the purport of that note, my dear Charles; I have been the bearer of Mr. Delamain’s defiance?”

Bayar bowed in silence, and the Peer resumed.

“You must forgive me if I ask you what you mean to do concerning it?”

“Certainly, my Lord, I shall meet Mr. Delamain,” replied the Chevalier, calmly.

"Bayar," said Lord Somerset, in the impressive manner that always gave peculiar weight to his words, when interested in any subject, "you judge this matter wrongly. I was aware that you would do so, and therefore chose to be the bearer of the billet you have just received. Considering you, as I do, in the light of a son, I may reasonably be expected to wish to prevent your risking your life against Mr. Delamain; but had my fears only pointed towards your personal safety, I needed only to have engaged my daughter in the cause, and to her tenderness you would probably concede more than to my remonstrances. I, however, know too well the firmness of your soul to suppose that an angel's tears and entreaties would prevail with you in a case like this, and have spared you the pain of encountering

encountering them, certain that nothing but deliberate reasoning *can* or *should* alter your purpose."

"And *even that*, my dear Lord," returned Bayar, "must be successful, if employed to make me decline this invitation. Mr. Delamain is a villain; but he claims reparation for an offence I have given him, and I cannot in honour refuse it."

"In honour!" repeated Lord Somerset, with an indignant smile; "what is this honour? A false and contradictory term, which you are ready to allow Delamain's claim to possessing, at the same time that you avow him to be a monster of cruelty, duplicity, and treachery.—On what grounds can he build his title to the distinction you

so eminently merit, of being a man of honour? On a constitutional fierceness of spirit that urges him voluntarily to stake his life in support of actions for which he would suffer little less than its deprivation under the cognizance of the laws of his country? And are you to encounter this man on even grounds?"

"My best friend," interrupted Bayar, smiling in his turn, "you must allow me to ask you one simple question—did you reason thus thirty years ago? Or, allowing that you thought thus, did you not act from the impulse of feeling?"

"Thirty years since," answered his Lordship, "I was, it is true, something older than yourself, but I had not learned to think.

think. Rash and impetuous, swayed by every gust of passion, what was right never came under my consideration; what was customary, was the rule of my actions, and they were often wrong, and still more frequently absurd. Bred up in the indulgence of every wish which a proud and passionate disposition led me to form, I entered the world impressed with false ideas of my own consequence. As I had been the object of partial and universal attention in my own family, I fancied that the observation of the whole world was fixed on me; and as pride rendered me unable to bear an offence, and passion made me frequently give one—and as I was constitutionally fearless, I supposed it incumbent on me to set an example to the admiring world around me, of the most punctilious observance of what is egregiously

misnamed the *point of honour*. Once I remember offering the satisfaction of taking my life, or losing his own, to a gentleman, for the mighty offence of incommoding his corns by treading on them.

“ But you, my dear Bayar, are in a far different situation from what I then was. Your temper has never been injured, nor your understanding perverted by the weak indulgence of doting relatives. From the misfortunes of your family, you were early taught to look upon yourself as the founder of your fortune and consequence; at the same time that you felt conscious of your descent from heroes that needed only to have their cause successful to have immortalized their memories. You have bravely combated the enemies of your country;

you.

you have been distinguished by the notice and approbation of your Prince; you have acquired respect and friendship from all to whom you are known! Fortune, incumbered only with the attachment of a lovely and amiable woman, offers herself to your acceptance. And is your life to be sported with because you offered a calm opposition to the violence of a scoundrel?"

Lord Somersfet spoke with an elevated tone and gesture this eulogium on his young friend; and when he mentioned his daughter, the tear of paternal fondness and rational admiration trembled in his fine, intelligent eye, as he looked at Bayar, to see how he was moved by his arguments. The latter was confounded, but not convinced. The ingenuousness with which Lord Somersfet had

confessed the errors of his youth, could not fail to give infinite force to the reasonings of his more mature and corrected judgment; yet still

“ The world, and its dread laugh,

“ Which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn,”

prevented his yielding to the truth of what he yet could not deny, and Lord Somerset resumed.

“ You say you have offended Mr. Delamain;—a confession of having done so, seems to imply a consciousness of having been wrong; yet I will venture to say you would act precisely as you have already done on an occasion exactly similar.”

“ If

“ If I had resolution to preserve that calmness which the pitiable situation of our lovely friend almost enforced, most surely I would,” said the Chevalier.

“ Yet, in accepting Mr. Delamain’s defiance, you confess tacitly that you think you have been in an error at least.”

“ My Lord,” cried Bayar, somewhat impatiently, “ I repeat that this is one of those cases in which we can only be guided by feeling.”

“ I deny it,” returned his Lordship.
“ Will you say that your feelings are more interested by any object on earth than by your Philippa? Yet you know that you are about to make her miserable; and that were she to know of your present designs,
and

and oppose them with the gentle arguments of her sex, though your feelings should be agonized by the sight of her distress, you would think it derogatory to your *honour* to desist from your design."

"Yet shall I," cried Bayar, warmly, "put it in the power of Mr. Delamain to expose me to the world as a coward?"

"Trust me, my much-valued young friend," returned the venerable Peer, "the noblest daring of an exalted mind is in defying the illiberal censures of fools and knaves in a right cause. Shew then to this insolent Delamain, that though you dare not equal him in the boldness of his crimes, you dare refuse to meet a villain on even terms in the field."

Bayar

Bayar respected the understanding—he was grateful for the zeal of his friend; but his resolution was unchanged, and he would on the following morning have met Mr. Delamain, had not that gentleman, in the interim, procured a warrant from the Chancellor, to prevent Lord Somerset and Serena leaving the kingdom. This circumstance at once determined the Chevalier; and instead of going in the morning to the place of appointment, he sent a footman with the following billet.—

“Yesterday I was determined to give Mr. Delamain the satisfaction of a gentleman for the offence he fancied he had received; because, cruel and treacherous as I
knew

knew his conduct to have been to a woman, I thought that to *men* his behaviour was *manly*.—This morning I resolve to treat him with the contempt due to the wretched meanness which dictated the insult of last night to the venerable and respected friend of the truly indignant

“ CHARLES BAYAR, *Chevalier*.”

With this answer to his demand of satisfaction, Mr. Delamain was forced to be content, as he also was when Lord Somerset represented to the Court of Chancery that the very existence of Serena depended on her going abroad; and, entering into the enormous recognizance of fifty thousand pounds for his own and her appearance, if living,

living, at an appointed period, he was permitted to leave England, accompanied by his fair charge, Miss Delville, Bayar, and Miss Mortimer, who proposed joining some friends then on the Continent.

CHAP. VI.

SEVERAL weeks elapsed, and Sir Piercy still continued unable to leave the Saxon village, where the tender and assiduous Caroline was unceasingly employed in serving and amusing him. For the latter office her powers, indeed, were not very great; her disposition had originally been mild, timid, and affectionate, rather than lively or fascinating; sorrow had shaded her character with the deepest gloom of insanity: and she now never gave even momentary indulgence

indulgence to gaiety, that it did not appear like a start of that "fitful fever" that had hung on her intellects for so long a time.

By degrees, however, the society of her beloved Delville established a sort of contented calm in her soul, favourable to the developement of a character, which grief had improved in firmness and decision. Mr. Marley had bestowed the best education possible on his daughter; but his aim was not merely to make her an accomplished woman—it was to render her a respectable one. The timid irresolution of her natural bias had been much against this view in the early part of her life; and it was only after his death, when she found it necessary to think for herself, that she was conscious of the powers of her understanding.

The

The uprightness of her heart, its tenderness, her sense, and information, could not be entirely lost on a man of Delville's discernment. Serena was lost to him; he thought himself bound in honour to conquer his attachment to her. Caroline, ever near him, ever attentive to his ease, appeared the woman best calculated to sooth a heart which, having been once deeply wounded, despairs of ever again feeling the warmth of tender passion; and in a short time he began to dread, as much as herself, the arrival of that period when his returning health would make it proper for him to quit Saxony and Caroline.

It was one of the first evenings that Delville was able to go out, when leaving the cottage, accompanied by Caroline, on
whose

whose arm (from weakness) he leant, they walked to a seat that had been formed by the peasants, under the shade of one of the lime-trees that grew near the pool. Nothing could be more serenely beautiful than the scenery and the hour; the sun was near setting, and glanced obliquely, gilding the wood-crowned hill behind which it was descending, and shedding a sort of golden radiance on the water, which reflected every separate leaf of the broad branch of the lime-tree that sheltered the seat,

“For talking age, and whispering lovers made.”

No noise was heard, but at intervals the shrill voices of the peasant children, who were gathering wild strawberries in the adjacent woods, and the short, quick twitter
of

of the birds, that sought their evening meal on the bank of the pool, where some corn had been winnowed in the day-time.

Caroline had brought a book with her from the cottage, as Delville had often expressed pleasure in hearing her read to him in this sequestered spot; but this evening the pages he had so often admired, seemed not in unison with his feelings: he sighed!

“ I know not how it is, Caroline,” said he, after a silence of some length, “ but I feel this evening a distaste for every thing but the indulgence of reflection, and the contemplation of the scene before me.”

“ Let your reflections then be soothing ones,” returned Caroline, “ and I shall
leave”

leave you to enjoy them, whilst I visit my long forsaken Convent."

She arose as she spoke, and would have departed; but Delville, taking her hand, drew her towards him.

"Leave me not, my gentle friend," he said, "for my thoughts would turn on your absence, and therefore must be painful. I am precisely in that mood when your conversation is more soothing to my feelings, than any thing except your attention. This spot, my Caroline," he continued, after a pause, "recals to my recollection one in my own country that is, from a strange train of circumstances, most interesting to me. In such a place as this have I
lingered

lingered hours, in all the misery of fear, sorrow, and perplexity."

His mind appeared deeply agitated, though he spoke of being soothed by the present circumstances.

"Why is memory given us, Caroline?" he enquired, with a sort of impatient sadness in his voice and air.

"Ah," thought Caroline, "why indeed? Except," said she, "it is given us as a warning to avoid in the future, what in the past has caused us pain."

"Alas! then, Caroline," he returned, sighing, "it is bestowed in vain! The heart, which disappointed attachment has agonized,

agonized, is not secured by remembrance from experiencing the same sensations—perhaps the same misery.”

Delville had touched the string on which hung all her sorrows. It was precisely that tender point in the soul of Caroline, which quivered with agony, verging on distraction. A short convulsive laugh, accompanied by a look of despair, declared to Delville how irritable were her feelings on this subject. He wished to say—“ Caroline, with you this throbbing heart, forgetting its sorrows, its deceptions, and disappointments, would seek refuge; to your kindness it would entrust all its little remnant of peace and feeling!” but the horrid idea of madness darted across his brain, and he shuddered to think

how near he had been to desiring an union with the unhappy Miss Marley.

“Tender, unfortunate girl, how have thy hopes been ever blighted, at the very moment that they arose almost to certainties! Wayward has been thy fate, Caroline, and mine not less so!”

These were the thoughts of Delville as, leaving his seat, he removed to a little distance nearer the water. His steps were feeble and unsteady. Caroline flew towards him; she took his hand with all the interesting grace of modest affection, and drawing his arm within her own, gently forced him to receive support from her.

“Ah, my lovely, my most amiable friend!”

friend!" cried Delville, "how shall I ever be able to prove my gratitude for your kindness?"

"I ask no proof," answered the innocent Caroline, with a tender smile, "that you possess every amiable feeling."

Again was the remembrance of Miss Marley's unfortunate derangement almost obliterated in the sweet sensations, the simple expressions her artless partiality gave rise to; again was Delville on the point of offering her his hand, and all the best affections of his heart; but a sudden illness overpowered him, and it was with difficulty that, with the assistance of Caroline only, he returned to the cottage.

On the following day the surgeon again saw Delville, and declared his opinion that a situation so far north, and in the season now approaching, was the most improper possible for his patient; and advised him to set out immediately, that he might by easy journies reach the south of Europe, before the intense heats of the autumn rendered travelling disagreeable, and dangerous to a person in his delicate state of health.

Caroline heard this sentence as she would have done that which condemned her to the most painful death. She saw herself on the point of being for ever divided from Delville, and her heart sickened at the prospect. Only one day was to intervene before his departure, in the preparations for which she forced herself to assist. Every
4 little

little service she had been accustomed to render Sir Piercy, now appeared of the greatest importance; and rather than have omitted one of them, she would have endured tortures.

As, with more than customary anxiety and care, she was preparing the bowl of cream that he always took for supper, Delville fixed his eyes on her very lovely and interesting figure, and touched by the idea that after the morrow he should see her no more, he said, in a voice of the utmost softness — “ To-morrow, Caroline, to-morrow I shall cease to behold you! Who then shall bestow on the wretched Delville those kind and soothing attentions that have so often charmed away the sense of pain, of sickness, and of sorrow?”

The sadness of his accent, the melancholy of his look, as he pronounced these words, could not fail to affect his fair companion; she burst into tears, and falling on her knees beside him—"Ah Delville!" she exclaimed, "this is too much! Shall you, who have been accustomed to the attentions of a fond sister and tender friends, perform a long and painful journey without any kind being near you to alleviate the sufferings you must necessarily be subject to? Shall you when, sinking with pain and fatigue, you look with anxious wishes for an attendant whom attachment to you would render their services acceptable—shall you then look round in vain for your nurse—your Caroline?—No, Delville, the world and I have taken leave for ever! I heed not its censures, I desire not its commendation!

Confiding

Confiding in you and in myself, I do not hesitate to attend you whithersoever you go, till you either meet some one who has a juster claim to the pleasure of serving you, or till you say—‘Caroline, your presence displeases me!’ Then, Delville, I depart for ever!”

“Generous, exalted girl!” exclaimed Sir Piercy, clasping the trembling Caroline to his breast, “never shall you repent your sweet confidence; the heart of your brother, my Caroline, will never lose its tender gratitude for your goodness! Come then with me; be to me a sister till the time arrives when my perplexing destiny may be decided; when either you shall weep with an angel’s pity over my grave, or ——”

Emotions, too powerful, too complicated for description, prevented what Delville would have further said, and the arrangement for the morrow was taken as granted, for neither of the parties spoke till they separated for the night.

During the tedious, and indeed hazardous journey and voyage all through Germany, and part of France, to reach Portugal, the attentions of Caroline to her feeble charge were unremitting, and they were not without a reward. Delville daily gained strength; the spitting of blood became less frequent; and by the time the travellers reached Lisbon, he was so much recovered, as to require none of the confinement of an invalid.

From

From many towns of France, as well as Germany, Delville had written to his family; but as they had left England, they did not receive them, any more than he did their's directed to his banker at Berlin.

The day after his arrival at Lisbon, as he was strolling along one of the principal streets, a female stepped out of the shop of a French *Marchande des Modés*, so immediately before him, that he had nearly pushed her down. In apologizing for the seeming rudeness, he raised his eyes to her face, and was almost petrified at beholding the beautiful features of Mrs. Fitzpatrick, arrayed in all the seducing charms of mildness and modesty, she so well knew how to assume.

A moment served to recal the recollection of Delville, but not of Theresa. Perfect mistress as she was of every art to indulge or to conceal her depravity, the sight of Sir Piercy, at the very moment when his presence was the most inimical possible to her views, so greatly agitated her, that she could not immediately recover herself; but still holding by his arm, which she had at first unconsciously seized to save herself from falling, she gazed on him with a mixture of astonishment and terror; till, shaking her from him with the most contemptuous coolness, Delville turned to depart.

“For mercy’s sake,” she cried, “what brings you to Lisbon?”

“That, or any thing else that concerns
me,

me, must be very immaterial to Mrs. Fitzpatrick," answered Delville, in the most frigid manner imaginable.

" Ah Delville!" said the Syren, with an affected sigh, " there was a time when my solicitude was pleasing to you."

" There is no need, Madam, to remind me of my former infatuation; I despise myself too sincerely for having once yielded to it, ever to forget it."

" He is," thought Theresa, " the same Delville as ever, inflexibly cold and indignant to those who have deceived and injured him."

But to suffer him thus to leave her, was

not her intention; her eyes instantly filled with tears, as she said—"Were it any other person, I should call it cruelty to reproach me with the errors of extreme youth."

"I do not reproach you, Mrs. Fitzpatrick," returned Delville; "if you are not totally callous to every sentiment of contrition, your own heart must forcibly enough upbraid you for the barbarous perfidy of your conduct."

"Delville, of what do you accuse me?" enquired the lady, with affected surprise; "of a too tender heart?"

"Of a false, a treacherous one, Madam! From the grave, whither your baseness hurried him, does not the injured Mr. Marley reproach

reproach you with your cruelty to his lovely, unsuspecting daughter? And can the friend of Caroline Marley, whom your arts drove to madness, look on, or think of you without abhorrence?"

"Wretched, wretched Theresa!" exclaimed Mrs. Fitzpatrick, redoubling her tears, "to what has thy folly brought thee!"

"Say rather, Madam, your *vices*! When guilt meets with its due punishment, it would fain shelter itself under the name of weakness."

Anger now predominated in the mind of the fair Theresa, above every other sentiment. Her face glowed with passion, as,
in

in a voice almost inarticulate, she cried—
“ Away then, proud, inexorable Delville!
Thou shalt repent the indignity with which
I am treated; thou shalt feel that Theresa
has still the power of avenging her injuries!”

“ Your threats, Mrs. Fitzpatrick,” returned Delville, “ only afford an additional proof of the malignity of your disposition, since to execute them will never be in your power.”

“ Sleep then, Delville, in fancied security,” cried the exulting fiend, “ till I have proved if, through the bosom of thy treasured Serena, my revenge can reach thee!”

With

With these words Theresa would have departed, but Delville arrested her steps.

“Tell me, Mrs. Fitzpatrick,” said he, sternly, “what you mean by all this?”

“What right have you to demand it, Sir?” retorted the lady, haughtily.

“The right of humanity and justice, Madam——”

Theresa interrupted him.—“Justice, Sir Piercy Delville, renders you the champion and lover of Mr. Delamain’s wife!”

“Whatever I may be, Madam,” said Delville, “concerns not you. Your utmost endeavours were employed to render
me

me a wretch!—But this is useless recrimination. I remain in the regretful consciousness of my own errors—you in the fatal power of doing mischief to all within your reach; but that Serena never will be so, is my comfort and satisfaction.”

“So confident, Sir Piercy!” cried Theresa, in her former tone of exultation; “know then she calls me friend.”

“Did I not know thee false, as I see thee fair,” said Delville, almost unconsciously, “thy words were horrible to me!”

The agitation that marked the features of Delville as she gave him this last piece of information, sufficiently proved to the vindictive Theresa that she possessed ample power

power to render him miserable. But to enter into any further explanations with him, did not suit her present purpose; and instantly taking advantage of the reverie into which he seemed sinking, she darted from him, and abruptly turned down an obscure street.

In this, however, Mrs. Fitzpatrick overreached herself, as her precipitate flight gave Delville an idea that for some reason or other she wished to avoid him; and her late menace connecting the idea of Serena with every thing, he determined to follow her.

CHAP. VII.

NOTWITHSTANDING the speed with which Mrs. Fitzpatrick tripped along the streets of Lisbon, and notwithstanding the recent illness of Delville, he did not lose sight of her. She was not at first aware of his pursuit; but when she discovered it, she evidently turned out of her road several times, in order to mislead and escape from him: and fancying herself at length successful, she ascended the hall-door steps of a very elegant hotel, in the suburbs of the town.

town. In turning, she perceived Delville close to her; but it was too late to recede, and hoping he would not dare to follow, she ran quickly up the great staircase.

She was mistaken: Delville did dare to do more, when supported by a consciousness of good intentions; and he nearly overtook Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who was proceeding to the second story, when a low and plaintive voice that issued from the open door of an elegant saloon, arrested his steps, and almost overcame his strength. It was that of Serena; and the next moment Miss Delville spoke in answer. The words were indistinct, but the tones could not be mistaken by Delville. Theresa was in an instant forgotten, and without consideration he entered the room. In the middle of it
(seemingly

(seemingly just going to leave the apartment) stood the hapless Serena; her fair, but emaciated form wrapped in the same deep mourning she had worn since the death of her brother, and a quantity of white muslin folded about her head, rendering her figure truly ghost-like; one arm was linked in that of Miss Delville, and her head reclined on the shoulder of her friend, as if a sudden giddiness had seized her, for her eyes were shut, and her frame trembled universally.

Imagination could not form a more interesting picture than those two lovely women now presented: Philippa, in the full pride of health and youthful charms, her sparkling eye dimmed with the tear of pitying affection, bending over the scarcely animated remains of what once was beauty, sweetness,

sweetness, and intelligence. Even in dying, Serena retained all her power of fascination to the heart of Delville; and when the first momentary shock of her altered appearance was past, he sprung forward, and clasped her to his breast with frantic tenderness.

Surprised as Philippa must necessarily be at the sudden appearance of her brother, she did not suffer that sentiment to overpower her; but assisted him to convey her almost insensible friend to a sofa, where, in a few minutes, she recovered sufficiently to say to Delville, in a tone that penetrated his heart—"Ah, best and most beloved friend, what strange caprice of destiny has led you hither to witness the closing hour of your poor Serena's life?"

The agitation of Delville was too excessive
to

to permit his making any answer ; he could only draw the lovely speaker closer to his heart, while tears of the most intolerable anguish fell from his eyes upon her pale and hollow cheek. Philippa, extremely affected, was unable to speak or move ; and Serena, who alone retained any recollection, resumed—

“ Wherefore, Delville, yield you to this immoderate sorrow ? I am not to be lamented. When with tender pity you watched the couch of my poor dying brother, you wept not for him ! Hennington was lost to this world’s happiness, and you rejoiced that he was hastening to a better ! Rejoice too with me, friend of my heart ! I go hence, and in Heaven there are no marriages ! ”

The

The little fortitude Delville had been endeavouring to collect, yielded to this last observation; and he inarticulately muttered curses on Delamain, as the bane of his felicity, and the destroyer of Serena.

The near approach of death, and the habit of resignation she had acquired, had given to the mind of the unfortunate Serena that self-possession she had so often suffered from the want of; and she had now power to sooth, and endeavour to console the agitated Delville. Too certain of the approach of her own dissolution, and too consciously pure in heart at such a moment to attend to forms, she gave to her reasonings with Delville all the tenderness which could alone render them efficacious; and he was growing tolerably composed, when Lord Somerset, entering

entering the room, cried gaily—"Here is Miss Mortimer, who this moment flew into my study, entreating me to hide her, now refuses to tell me what she fears, and you must all examine her."

Lord Somerset's attention was too much taken up with the lady whom he was endeavouring to force into the saloon, for him to observe his son, who now beheld in Miss Mortimer Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

It was evident that she did not know he had followed her into the house; for on seeing him, she screamed, and would have fled: but Delville was too quick for her, and fiercely seizing her by the arm—"How, abandoned wretch," he cried, "how became you the companion of angels?"

"My

“ My Lord,” continued he, turning to his father, whose astonishment may easily be conceived, “ how came this infamous woman under your protection ?”

“ Piercy, Piercy,” cried Lord Somerset, impatiently, and somewhat angrily, “ Why is Miss Mortimer insulted ?”

“ Her name is not Mortimer, my Lord,” returned Delville, almost furiously ; “ her name is Fitzpatrick, and once was Meliphant, the curse of all whom her specious beauty and diabolical art could fascinate !”

“ Miss Meliphant—my brother’s wife !” exclaimed Miss Delville, unconsciously.

“ Not his wife, Philippa,” cried Delville ;

"once, to his shame, your brother's mistress!"

"Let me understand you, Piercy," said Lord Somerset, with an air of perplexity; "what is it you mean by your charges against the friend of your sister and Serena?"

This was the very idea that maddened the proud and impetuous Delville. Theresa appeared in the light of his evil genius, perpetually haunting him with the remembrance of his follies. There is a species of complaisance which every well-bred man finds it almost impossible to divest himself of in his manners towards women, and no man had in general more of it than Delville himself; but Theresa had, in his idea, forfeited every claim to consideration, and, heedless

of the presence of Lord Somerset, from whom such an intimation would with more propriety have come, he told her that till she could leave the hotel, his sister and her friend would remain in their own apartments.

“ Hold, Delville !” said Lord Somerset ; “ whatever may have been the conduct of this lady, let our’s at least be regulated by humanity.—Till your friends arrive at Lisbon, Madam,” he added, addressing Theresa, “ the use of any apartments you please to fix on here, are much at your service ; but you must excuse the absence of my family and myself, though our servants you may consider as your own.”

To this truly considerate speech Theresa

returned such an answer as might be expected from a woman of such violent passions, irritated as she now was; the bitterest curses her fertile imagination could furnish her with, she lavishly bestowed on Delville, who shuddered to behold the fury he had once loved, and had been so near devoting his life to. Nor did the enraged Mrs. Fitzpatrick at all spare insults to the trembling Serena—some of them too gross for endurance; and Lord Somerset, in despite of his age, his rheumatism, and his politeness, assisted his son to force the beautiful demoniac from the apartment.

When Theresa found that it was not in her power to make herself more odious than she had already done by persisting in her frantic behaviour, she thought proper to

cool sufficiently to consider that her wisest way was to betake herself to a friend of some consideration she possessed at Lisbon; and immediately she adopted the measure.

It was now that the re-united family of Lord Somerset began to make mutual enquiries and explanations, in the course of which Miss Marley's history was introduced, and created universal interest in her destiny in the minds of all Delville's hearers, amongst whom was the Chevalier Bayar.

"Ah, my dear Sir," cried the artless Philippa, seizing Lord Somerset's hand, "let us fly to bring this sweet Caroline hither! While I live, I shall adore her for having preserved my brother!"

“ She is truly worthy of your friendship, Philippa,” said Delville, “ and it will give me the utmost satisfaction to see her under my father’s protection; more particularly as she has already spoken of residing in a Convent whilst she remains at Lisbon.”

Lord Somers set was not less eager than were his children in the performance of any act of benevolence; and notwithstanding the extreme heat, he insisted on Delville immediately conducting him to Miss Marley. Miss Delville desired earnestly to be of the party; and her being admitted, occasioned another addition to it, as Bayar could not endure to lose sight of her for a moment.

Left, at her own request, entirely alone,

Serena

Serena endeavoured to collect her scattered thoughts, and fix them to one point, though that was of the most painful nature.

From the manner in which Delville had spoken of Miss Marley, and from the circumstance of her having so long attended him, being convinced of her partiality to him, Serena did not entertain the least doubt that he felt for her a gratitude so tender as to merit the name of love; and this conviction, rather than the recollection of her own fatal marriage, instructed her in the necessity there was that she should behold him only as a friend; but

“ Of all the science taught a lover yet,

“ 'Tis sure the hardest lesson, to forget;”

and Serena ineffectually struggled with her long fondly cherished attachment to the exalted friend of her brother. It was in vain that reason pointed out to her the propriety of the sacrifice of his society, if she could not behold him with the calmness it demanded; she still found some plausible reason why she should not retire to her own chamber (which increasing illness rendered the only proper place for her) till she had seen Delville once more, and discovered whether Miss Marley were really so lovely and interesting as he had described her to be.

After remaining about an hour in the most uneasy state of expectation possible, Serena at length heard the voices of her friends, as they entered the hotel, and was nearly overcome
by

by the painful impatience of her own feelings, before Lord Somerset, entering the saloon, presented to her the fair, the gentle, amiable Caroline.

Not without emotion did Miss Marley behold her still lovely rival; but in her nature all was sweetness, pity, and tenderness: and as with the softest grace she pressed the hand of Serena to her bosom, she promised to be her nurse, and if possible repay to Delville some of his kindnesses, by her attention to the woman of his heart.

Had Caroline spent years in studying what to say that would be most cruelly wounding to Sir Piercy, she could not have more effectually executed such a purpose.

When at a distance from Serena, the sweetness of mind and manners of Miss Marley had their due influence over a heart of such sensibility as Delville's; and he almost fancied nothing was wanting to complete the felicity of his life, but devoting it to Caroline. No sooner, however, did Serena make her appearance, than with an aching heart he confessed to himself that whilst she was another's, misery must be his.

It is thus that, removed from every temptation to evil, and with every incentive to good, we suppose ourselves firm in the practice of virtue; but the breath of seduction blows, and the unstable fabric is levelled in the dust.

The

The gentle Caroline did not promise more than she readily undertook. All the cares she had bestowed on Delville during his tedious illness were now transferred to Serena, whom she scarcely left for a moment, pleased at first with the idea that she was conciliating the regard of Delville, and when Serena became known to her, delighted to testify her attachment to the lovely sufferer herself.

With the history of Serena Miss Marley was very imperfectly acquainted, and in short knew no more of it than Delville had in his delirium betrayed; from thence she had collected that Miss Hennington had been basely betrayed by Mr. Delamain, and, from motives of delicacy respecting her child, had rejected the hand of Delville,

although adoring him;—but of her late marriage she had never heard, and as Serena was the only name she was ever called by, and no one of the family hinted even at past events, she had no means of knowing that last circumstance, so aggravating to the painful feelings of Delville.

For his deep despondence then, even when the fluctuations of Serena's disorder seemed to hold out hopes of her recovery, Caroline could never account in any satisfactory manner. Often when a transient amendment in the health of her charge induced those around her to suppose she was growing well, would the innocent girl fly to Delville. to be the first to communicate intelligence she imagined would give him pleasure; and often did his behaviour on
such

such occasions astonish her. He would sometimes fervently bless and thank her for her attention to his Serena, and seem only anxious about her recovery; then he would take her hands, press them to his lips and to his bosom, and conjure her, for his sake, to be careful of her own health, since if she suffered from confinement and watching, nothing on earth could make him happy.

By degrees, however, he became more consistent; there was less passion in his manner of speaking of Serena, and a calmer tenderness in his behaviour to Caroline. His sister, who (after the recovery of the former) wished nothing more earnestly than to see him the husband of the latter, now despaired of seeing her wish accomplished, while in reality it was becoming every day more likely than the last.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

ALMOST two months had elapsed since Serena's arrival in Lisbon, and her health did not seem in the least amended by the change of air. At times, as is usual in most consumptive cases, she would appear as if recovering rapidly for a few days, but such fallacious promises were always attended by some succeeding symptom of marked decay; and by the time the winter commenced, there remained no hopes of her ever seeing the spring. Caroline was her assiduous attendant;

attendant; and Serena repaid her care with the most tender friendship and gratitude.

As the prospects of the unfortunate invalid seemed closing to an early death, she appeared to feel the retrospect of past events less painful;—she now often mentioned Mr. Delamain, sometimes with pity, and always without resentment; she frequently spoke of the gratitude she felt to Lord Somerset and his family for their kindness to her, in the most trying scenes of her short but eventful life; and would declare her satisfaction in the idea that her death would put an end to the expence and trouble his Lordship had been at in prosecuting the suit with Mr. Delamain.

Caroline, who was usually present when
she

she held these and similar discourses, could not now be ignorant of any of Serena's story, as, upon such points as her curiosity had been excited, and not gratified, she applied for information to Miss Delville.

The marriage of Philippa had hitherto been protracted by her unwillingness to have it celebrated during the melancholy illness of Serena, who, when they had resided some weeks in Lisbon, became very urgent with her no longer to delay her own and Bayar's happiness. One day that she pressed the point even more warmly than usual, Miss Delville said—"When I see your health in some degree restored, it will be time enough to think on this matter."

"Why, my dear Philippa, should you
wait

wait for an event that you must be certain never will arrive? Did I not know how utterly incapable of affectation you are, I should suppose you meant to put off your marriage till your friends, wearied by your excuses for it, should oblige you to decide at once, either to yield to their wishes, or remain single. Hitherto you have treated Bayar with generosity, and your Serena with the most unexampled kindness; do not then give us reason to complain of you, but at once reward his long attachment to you, and give me the satisfaction of seeing you happy before I go hence!"

It was impossible to resist a pleader so beloved, more especially when aided by the tender entreaties of the Chevalier, and the advice

advice of Lord Somerset and Sir Piercy; and Miss Delville fixed a day in the ninth week of their *sejour* in Lisbon, for her marriage in the Ambassador's chapel.

As the state of Serena's health was such as to preclude the possibility of her accompanying her friend to the altar, and as Philippa could not resolve to go alone, she apologized to Miss Marley for asking her to be her companion.

"There is no excuse necessary, my dearest friend," answered Caroline; "for though, from the habits of the religious societies in which I have lived, I appear a Catholic, I am, in fact, from principle and education, a Protestant. I do not consider it as being of the slightest importance whether

whether my prayers ascend to the Father of Mercies mingled with the Latin ones of the officiating priest, or with the more comprehensible devotions of a Protestant congregation. I do not ridicule those tenets of the Roman Catholic Church that I think absurd, because I pity those who are so weak as to give credit to them; for I think that let what would have been the religion in which I was educated, my reason would revolt at the idea of believing an old man had the power of God himself, to absolve me from the punishments of the world to come for my crimes; or that the stupid, ignorant beings one sees in the habits of priests, had the power of producing the Supreme Being at pleasure. As to the point of attending you to the altar, I own I would rather be excused. If I accompany
you,

you, our poor Serena must be left entirely alone; as certainly neither Lord Somerset nor Sir Piercy would chuse to be absent on the occasion."

"My father, I know, would not," returned Miss Delville; "but my brother—indeed, Caroline, I fear he will not be persuaded to go with us."

"You are right, Philippa," said Delville, who had, unperceived by the ladies, been some time in the room; "and there is only one circumstance that can make me the spectator of such a ceremony."

"And that is—being the principal immediately afterwards," cried Philippa, pleased by the cheerful air her brother's countenance wore;

wore; but she severely reproached herself for having spoken so unguardedly, when she saw it take the most serious cast possible.

He seemed doubtful for some moments whether or not he should speak; but at length advancing to Caroline, and taking her hand, he said—"My sister has again spoken truly, Caroline; but on you it depends whether I shall ever be the principal on such an occasion. When first I knew you, Caroline," he continued, "my heart had not yet learned the fatal lesson of love; but it was not long in its happy ignorance: Theresa soon proved to me that, however sweet were its pleasures, there were heavy penalties attending it."

At this part of his discourse, Delville saw
his

his sister's countenance darken; and conscious of what were her thoughts—"I should not," said he, "mention this disgraceful entanglement, did I not know that my Caroline has often thought of it to my disadvantage, and did I not wish to let you see every weakness of the heart I offer to your acceptance. When Theresa unmasked the fiend, I forswore love, as I thought, for ever; but I met with Serena Hennington, and my resolution to retain my indifference was no more. No human being can have an idea of the sufferings this fatal attachment drew on me; so various, so complicated were they in their nature, and each so acutely painful, that the very retrospect of them almost renews their poignancy.

"When in Saxony, my Caroline," continued

tinued Delville, “ your generous compassion preserved the life I set no value upon. I was wandering without any pursuit, (for to regain my lost peace I could not even hope), more anxious to escape from myself, than to be instructed or even amused by travel. I now saw you daily, hourly; every passing moment was marked by some exertion of truly feminine tenderness in the relief of my bodily maladies; to those of the mind, which more cruelly oppressed me, you gave your tears; you appeared to forget your own sorrows in your desire to alleviate mine, and I loved you as a sister. Yet still there was a timid delicacy in every word and action, that forbade my cherishing the idea of so sweet a relationship betwixt us; and often—often have I wished that

that Serena never had existed, or that my wayward heart had reserved itself for Caroline.

"I believe that when once a man begins to *wish* to be able to transfer his affections, he is not far from doing so; and the pain I felt on the evening I proposed leaving Saxony without you, convinced me that Serena was not so firmly established in my heart as I had imagined.

"Many times during our pilgrimage to Lisbon, I was on the point of declaring (what I felt to be true) that my happiness was centered in making you mine for ever; but the dread of losing your society compelled my silence. I feared you would scorn a heart that had been subjected to
so

so many revolutions; and I knew that with a rejected, nay even an accepted lover, you would never consent to travel.

“ In arriving here,” Delville continued, still addressing Caroline, whose tears fell in torrents on the hand which held both her’s, “ in meeting with my family and Serena, my heart received a severe shock; but I yet think I should have beheld the latter with less emotion, had not the art of the unprincipled Theresa distracted me with I know not what apprehensions for her safety and honour. But to enable us clearly to describe mental impressions, it requires that their more prominent features should be softened by the hand of time, since what appears at first to be the great leading feature, often proves

but the distended shadow of some minute object.

“ Of this, however, Caroline, I will venture to assure you, had I two months ago asked for your hand, your conquest of my affections would not have been so complete as at present; to an idea of right, not to sentiment, you would have owed the entire eradication of my passion for Serena. Had I not seen you, as I have done, for these last six weeks, you would have possessed but half a heart.

“ It would be a false delicacy towards you to affect ignorance of what were your sentiments of me—I only ask you, Caroline, if they are unchanged, and if you are willing

willing to entrust your future happiness to my care?"

It was some moments before Caroline could command her voice sufficiently to make any reply to the candid and generous speech of Delville; but when she could articulate, it was not to bid him despair. Regardless of the presence of Miss Delville, she confessed to him not only her long and faithful attachment to him, but the transport his present sentiments inspired.

Philippa was herself one of the most artless of human beings, though in some measure tinctured with the prudish reserve that foreigners say is an essential part of the character of every English woman. She had admired the candour of Serena on a

similar subject, but of such frank declarations as Miss Marley now made, she never had an idea. Yet, with all the ingenuous tenderness of Caroline, there was an unaffected modesty in her looks and in her manner, that gave an irresistible charm to her words.

It was not long before Lord Somerset was made acquainted with this change in the sentiments of his beloved son; and most truly did he rejoice, since Serena could not be his daughter, in the prospect of seeing Delville united to one so truly amiable, and so fondly attached to him as Caroline Marley.

As his Lordship expressed a desire of having both his children married on the same day,

day, and as neither Delville nor Caroline made any objection, Philippa hesitatingly mentioned Serena, as if she would have said —“ Is it not cruel to make the dying Serena witness the nuptials of the man she loves, with another?”

Sir Piercy understood what she meant, and said—“ You, my sister, must communicate the events of this day to Mrs. Delamain. Of her regard both for Caroline and myself, I have no reason to doubt; and it would be an absurd affectation of delicacy to her feelings, to conceal from her what I know the benevolence of her nature will make her derive pleasure from.”

Delville was not mistaken in his opinion of Serena. With the strongest appearance

of sincerity, she congratulated Caroline on her approaching happiness, and was a strenuous advocate for Lord Somerfet's plan of having the two weddings celebrated on the same day. She, however, made a plea of illness to excuse herself from seeing Delville; but sent a message to him by his sister, expressive of her satisfaction in his present prospects.

CHAP. IX.

PREVIOUS to the intended marriage of Delville, he entered into a full explanation with Lord Somerset, concerning Mrs. Fitzpatrick ; but as to give that lady's motives for her late conduct was not in the power of either gentleman, a succinct account of her operations may be more agreeable to the reader than a narrative of their conversation.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick had been extremely
K 4 disappointed

disappointed by the contemptuous neglect with which Lord Somerfet had treated her epistle to him, which she took care to inform herself reached him; but she determined, if possible, to procure an introduction to his family, that she might be able to conduct herself in the manner most likely to ensure the success of another application she meant to make in favour of her claims.

The character of every member of the society in the Castle, and its neighbourhood, was perfectly known to Theresa; and her first battery was levelled against the almost imbecile mind of Mrs. Powis. In order to accomplish this, she, without difficulty, contrived to be invited to the house of a Mrs. Morton, who being very vain, very silly, and

and very sentimental, and having, to ensure the comforts of a fine house and a coach, married Mr. Morton, a thorough bred Yorkshire 'Squire, she found it absolutely necessary to have a female friend always in the house, to whom she might breathe her soft distresses in being united for life to a monster who had no more sentiment and delicacy than one of his best hunters or staunchest hounds, and who really seemed to possess more affection for those interesting quadrupeds than for the soft, the tender, sighing Mariamne.

Prepossession was ever the reigning foible of Mrs. Powis's character; and the exterior and manners of the *sei-disant* Miss Mortimer were such as could not fail to charm.

Behold her now firmly established in Somerset Castle, studious to conciliate the regard of every individual in it, and almost as successful as she could wish. Fortunately for her, Mr. Fitzpatrick had some months before broken his neck in riding a race, and was therefore no impediment to her plans for her future advancement.

From the truly paternal affection with which Lord Somerset always behaved to Serena, she could not entertain a doubt of what were his wishes for her; and from some of his opinions which she had artfully founded, she could no more doubt that he considered Sir Piercy's entanglement with Miss Meliphan as by any means a serious affair. Since, therefore, the fair Theresa could not hope to be the wife of Delville,
she

She formed the laudable resolution of being his mother-in-law, if Lord Somerset would let her.

From the first time that this plan presented itself to her imagination, Theresa entertained the most sanguine hopes of its success.

Lord Somerset certainly did admire Miss Mortimer, and supposed her mind to be as amiable as her face was perfect; and there was so much of the stately courtesy of the last age in his manners, that a person might easily be led to imagine he entertained a partiality where it was by no means the case. Had a late celebrated political writer been acquainted with the venerable Lord Somerset, he would not have so feelingly

lamented that "the age of chivalry was past," since not even the Knight of La Mancha himself addressed the fair Maritornes with more high-sounding compliments, than his Lordship sometimes addressed Miss Mortimer with. Nevertheless no idea of the honour she intended him ever entered into his thoughts; and even if it had, he was too fond of his children to give them a stepmother, and much too wary on his own account to entrust his peace to a very lovely woman, who declared herself under twenty years of age.

So very highly had she flattered herself on her prospect of being Lady Somerset, that it was with the certainty of returning such that she went to Lisbon, where her very *mal-a-propos* meeting with Delville completely disconcerted all her projects for
the

the present. But in leaving Lord Somerset's hotel, she had taken unto her society a spirit almost as wicked as herself, and Mrs. Fitzpatrick was not yet totally discomfited.

The preparations for Miss Delville's marriage had all been made in England, so that there was now little to be done except for Delville and Caroline. The business of settlements was all executed by Lord Somerset's solicitor in London; and when they arrived, there was nothing to impede the completion of the happiness of all parties. That, however, had very nearly been shaken by a whim of Caroline's. Notwithstanding she was, from residing with an English family, an object of general observation from it, she had never laid aside the habit of a Sister of the order of Mercy; and when Miss Delville,
on

on the day preceding that fixed for the marriage of both, enquired sportively if she never meant to abandon that hateful dress, she replied that it was her intention to be married in it.

It was in vain Miss Delville urged the strange appearance it would have, in vain Serena represented the impropriety; with the pertinacity with which a disordered mind lays hold of trifles, she adhered to this resolution, till Miss Delville mentioned how much it must hurt not only Lord Somerset, but Delville himself. She then immediately gave up the point; but the circumstance made such an impression on Philippa, that she mentioned it to Bayar, and he, without considering the effect it might have, related it to Delville.

The

The mind of Delville had suffered such severe shocks, that it had lost much of its firmness; he had not yet enjoyed a sufficient term of tranquillity to restore it to its accustomed tone, and he felt this little whim of Caroline's in a manner difficult to describe. It recalled to his ideas the horrid recollection of her having once been insane; and though in his calmer moments he was fully sensible that in such circumstances it should not militate against his peace, it gave a dejection to his manners during the whole evening.

At night, when the family were separating, Bayar took Miss Delville's hand, and drawing her towards him, whispered, as he kissed her cheek—"We shall not again be parted."

Caroline

Caroline caught the words; she beheld the action, and could not help stealing a glance at Delville, who was, to appearance, very deliberately lighting a candle (he had several times snuffed out) at one of the branches that stood on the supper-table; her eyes filled with tears, and she could scarcely articulate a good-night to Lord Somerset, as she left the room.

Delville seemed instantly awakened to recollection, and followed her.

“My Caroline,” cried he, “forgive me! I have been unaccountably oppressed by the heat to-day.”

“Ah!” exclaimed the apprehensive Miss Marley, “you are indisposed. Suffer me
to

to bring you some of Serena's medicine; I fear your hectic complaint is returning."

"No, my sweet girl," said Delville, more calmly, "I am not ill indeed; but if you do not wish to make me so, you must not flatter me with this solicitude. Who would not be sick to have my Caroline for a nurse?"

From that moment Delville's whole soul seemed devoted to his lovely Caroline; and nothing could exceed her happiness.

During the whole of the morning of the next day, Serena remained in solitude, not indulging hopeless regrets, but occupied in endeavouring so far to acquire the mastery of her feelings, as to meet Delville at dinner, (when she had promised Lord Somerset

Somerſet to appear), as ſhe thought ſhe ought to ſee the huſband of her beloved Caroline. Her efforts were not unſucceſſful; and on that day, as well as on the very few that intervened before her diſſolution, her conduct towards him was that of an affectionate ſiſter to the moſt deſerving of brothers.

Early in the morning, in the commencement of the fourth month of her reſidence in Liſbon, Serena, the amiable and unfortunate Serena, breathed her laſt in the arms of Caroline, (who had been awakened by the intelligence that ſhe was dying), entreating her to be mindful of the happineſs of Delville, and not to ſuffer him to forget his promiſe of protecting and cheriſhing her infant ſon.

As

As soon as it was made known to Lord Somerset that his beloved Serena no longer suffered, he lost no time in writing to Mr. Delamain, to inform him of her decease, and to desire his directions in regard to her being carried to England. This he did at the express desire of Serena; and he was by no means sorry when the necessary time of interment, notwithstanding the embalmment, arrived without his having had any notification of his letter being received. With the aid of a few broad pieces, leave was procured for Serena's being buried in the cemetery of a neighbouring Convent; and it was more than a week after the last offices were performed, that Lord Somerset received the following letter, in answer to the one he had written, which he found had been sent from England back to Lisbon, where

where Mr. Delamain had been for some time.

“ MY LORD,

“ I had this morning the honour of your letter, informing me of the decease of your *protégée*, which was only an official intimation of an event I heard of within two hours of its taking place, from a lady you knew by the name of Sophia Mortimer. Your Lordship infinitely over-rated my affection for the late Mrs. Delamain, when you imagined I should desire to possess her remains, or even take the trouble of having them conveyed to the family vault of my ancestors; I have no doubt they will remain perfectly quiet wherever your Lordship has

has been pleased to bestow them, even should they have been committed to unsanctified earth.

“The suit depending between us, I need scarcely mention to your Lordship, must now be at an end; though, as you seem fond of law, I have no doubt Sir Piercy Delville will permit you to conduct the suit against Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who means immediately to prosecute him for the breach of a promise of marriage. That lady has at length yielded to my entreaties, and has placed herself under my protection, which will oblige me to forward her affairs as much as possible. As your Lordship has so often shewn your chivalric inclinations for protecting distressed damsels, you cannot certainly

certainly condemn the present proceedings
of your Lordship's

"Most devoted,

"Very humble servant,

"HENRY DELAMAIN."

Lisbon, ——— 1794.

But, notwithstanding Mr. Delamain,
under the influence of the detestable Theresa,
could thus *write* in regard to the unfortu-
nate Serena, his heart was not so entirely
callous as not to *feel* for the victim of his
cruelty. He had now connected himself
with a being so depraved, that Serena was
soon amply avenged on her betrayer. Mrs.
Fitzpatrick became every day more hate-
ful to him; but he had not courage to
order

order her to quit his house, and he accordingly left it in her possession, seldom going near it, or when he did, cautiously avoiding her he suffered to be considered as its mistress.

From the suit against Sir Piercy, nothing but expence and vexation could ever be made to accrue: Mr. Delamain carelessly permitted his money and credit to be employed in it, and from its infamy he could never, with any decency, appear in England. His life, therefore, was spent in wandering about the Continent, with Mrs. Fitzpatrick in his suite, plagued by and tyrannizing over her, till relieved from her society by a new and richer lover.

The family of Lord Somerset, in the
meantime,

meantime, enjoyed, at Somerset Castle, every felicity they so well merited. De Melanville and his Emily, though they nominally resided at Powis Hall, spent most of their summers with Sir Piercy and Lady Delville, to whom Lord Somerset had given up the Castle, residing alternately with them, and at an elegant house in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, which, with the adjoining estate, he had purchased, and presented to Bayar, who would on no account abandon the profession he had been brought up in.

But no such happy destiny remained for the unfortunate Honora Seward. On his return from Lisbon, Lord Somerset made very particular enquiries concerning her, of an old gentleman, a relation of
Mr.

Mr. Delamain's, who being of a very singular turn of mind, was the only avowed friend of the divorced wife of his kinsman. From him Lord Somers set learned that as Honora had had no fortune; she was, on her divorce, reduced to live on a small annuity, purchased for her by her father long before his death, and when she was quite a child. This gentleman, whose name was Sheldon, making a trifling addition to it, she had gone abroad; for her reasons for which proceeding Mr. Sheldon referred Lord Somers set to a letter of her own, written to him on her leaving England.

“ I will not, my only friend,” wrote Honora, “ reject your offered bounty, because

because it puts it in my power to adopt a plan I have long meditated.

“ Whatever my conduct has been, believe me my heart still retains its reverence for virtue. By virtue I do not simply mean that chastity which many possess only from ugliness, and the neglect of mankind; I mean that pure and divine emanation which glows in the heart of Miss Delville, and the lovely, unfortunate Serena. There are those in the world that would class that sweet victim of baseness but little higher in the list of virtue than your poor Honora; but I more justly estimate her superiority, and since I can no longer serve her, I dare not enter her presence. I cannot endure the life I at present lead: I find myself pointed at by the finger of scorn; let me

go wherever I may, even in Church, if a numerous congregation compel any of the ladies of the parish to enter the pew where I sit, they take as much care to prevent their flounces touching my humble garb, as if they fancied a blasted character infectious. Yet I remember those very women, when I bore the name of Mr. Delamain, though by my own fault separated from him, courted my notice with the utmost assiduity. I was not then, it is true, the wretched, disgraced being I now am, though a thousand times more guilty! Thank Heaven, my errors have received a part of their due punishment, and it has awoken me to a sense of religion and duty. My life is not meritorious, but it is at least innocent; to wear away its remains in peace, if not in respectability, I mean to retire to Bern;

there I am not known, and there your next letters will find your grateful

“HONORA.”

“And shall the selfish, inhuman prude presume to say this woman is abandoned of Heaven?” exclaimed Lord Somerset, when he had read the foregoing lines. “She may possess the exterior of virtue, but in the heart of Honora it reigns in its true essence!”

Lord Somerset contrived to make a very considerable addition to the income of this unfortunate young woman, in the name of Mr. Sheldon who, though a most worthy character,

character, was too strongly tinctured with the vice of avarice to make Honora, from his own fortune, as comfortable as she deserved to be.

FINIS.

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The Count Saint Blancard is an entertaining and well-connected story, and may agreeably beguile a leisure hour.

Critical Review, November 1795.

This work avowedly is a translation from the French; it is probably the labour of some industrious *Emigré*, as the French idiom predominates. The story is well chosen, and is divested of the immorality, party, and levity, which are too frequently found in the lighter productions of the French writers. To those who seek amusement in tracing the former manners of France, we may recommend this little work; it may divert a solitary hour, without endangering youth, or disgusting age.

Monthly Review, October 1795.

